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THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

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WELLINGTON

SOLDIER AND STATESMAN

AND THE REVIVAL OF THE MILITARY POWER OF ENGLAND

BY

WILLIAM O'CONNOR MORRIS

SOMETIME SCHOLAR OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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PREFACE

IN the case of Wellington, as in that of Napoleon, the correspondence of the great soldier and statesman contains the fullest and best record of his life and career. That correspondence falls into two parts: the exclusively military despatches edited by Gurwood, and the supplementary and civil despatches, edited by the eldest son of Wellington, the second Duke. This immense collection of papers, which contains almost innumerable accounts of military events and of affairs of State, and memoranda on India, on the Peninsular War, on the Congress of Vienna, on the Campaign of 1815, on the Army of Occupation, and on Continental and British politics, during nearly half a century, distinctly shows us what Wellington was as a general, a military administrator, and an illustrious public servant; we can gather from it the best estimate that can be formed of his nature and character. But the general reader would be lost in this mighty maze, if it is not without a plan; he properly looks to large condensation and abridgment, and, besides, recourse must be had to other sources of information, in order fully to comprehend what Wellington was in the field, in Council, in the Cabinet, and in public

and private life. A "selection" from the military despatches has been made by Gurwood: it is of considerable value, and has often been referred to in this volume.

For Wellington's exploits and career in India, in addition to his own correspondence, the reader may consult the Lives of Lord Harris and of Sir David Baird, and especially the despatches of Lord Wellesley, which are of the very greatest importance. The different histories of India, relating to this period, may also be perused.

The authorities on the Peninsular War are numerous, and some of sterling value. The correspondence of Napoleon should be compared at every point of the contest with that of Wellington; the difference between the direction of military operations at a distance and on the spot has seldom been so conspicuously made manifest. Napier's *History of the Peninsular War* is a well-known classic, but the brilliant and self-opinionated soldier is far from just to the British Government of the day; he is almost a blind idolater of Napoleon, and he is far too much an eulogist of Soult. Mr. Oman's new *History of the Peninsular War* as yet has only reached the end of the Campaign of 1809, but when complete it promises to be a work of remarkable merit; it is especially useful in its descriptions of the topography of Portugal and Spain, and of the natural characteristics of those lands, as bearing upon the military operations which took place; the research of the author is very commendable; his views are usually discriminating and just. On the French side, Foy's *Guerre de la*

Peninsule is only a fragment, but it gives us many details of interest; its account of the organisation and the qualities of the French and the British armies, if not without pardonable national bias, is instructive, even striking. Hardly any of the French commanders have left us much that is profitable on the Peninsular War; but the Memoirs of King Joseph and of Marshal Jourdan deserve attention; Marmont has explained tolerably well the Campaign of Salamanca and the battle; Koch's account of Massena's campaign in Portugal has real merit; and information may be gathered from the Memoirs of Marbot and Thiébault. For general histories, Alison and Thiers may be consulted; the sieges in the Peninsula have been described by Jones and Belmas.

The literature of the Waterloo campaign fills a library, but it is unnecessary to enlarge upon it here. Napoleon's account in his *Commentaries* is very incorrect, and in places disingenuous, but it traces the main incidents of this passage of arms with characteristic superiority of insight: the tendency of history is to confirm the views of the Emperor. I pass by a great collection of authorities, largely obsolete and now not of much value, and shall only refer to two works, recently published, the *Campaign of Waterloo* by the late Mr. Ropes, and *1815* by M. H. Houssaye. These narratives are fully up to date, and abound in admirable comments and reflections; they are, in the main, candid and impartial. I may also notice my own *Campaign of 1815* which has been received with more than ordinary favour.

By far the best account of the political career of Wellington can be collected from the *Memoirs* of Greville, the English St. Simon. Much, too, can be learned from the correspondence of Peel, edited by Parker, from debates in Parliament, and from contemporaneous histories.

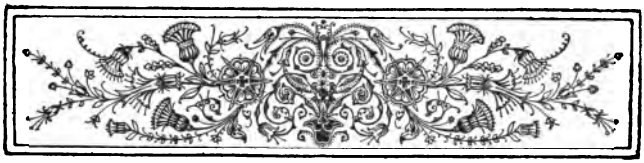
The biographies of Wellington are not numerous, or of remarkable merit. That of Brialmont is, I think, the best; the work of Sir Herbert Maxwell contains some very valuable papers taken from family archives and correspondence.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR MORRIS.

26th November, 1903.

The last proofs of this volume had been passed for the press before the author's death, an event which will be regretted by all students of the Napoleonic period. The index was to have been made by Judge O'Connor Morris; but failing health prevented him even from commencing this task, and it has consequently been executed by another hand. The present volume may be regarded as complementary to the author's earlier study on Napoleon, than which few works in this series have enjoyed a wider popularity. Wellington is here treated mainly as a soldier; and, in telling the story of his life, the author has taken the opportunity of discussing a number of disputed questions in the history of the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns. The Judge's wide acquaintance with the memoirs and papers of the leaders on both sides led him to conclusions which, although they have been challenged by some high authorities, deserve the attention due to acute independent study of the original sources of information.

OXFORD, Sept. 1, 1904. H. W. C. DAVIS.



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WELLINGTON

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

Birth and family of Wellington—The Wellesleys or Wesleys in Ireland—Arthur Wesley, his boyhood—He is sent to Eton and Angers—He enters the army—His attention to his military duties, and his studies—He is placed on the staff of Lord Westmoreland, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—He seconds the address in the Irish Parliament—The Catholic Relief Bill of 1793—He distinguishes himself in the campaign of 1794 in Holland, but seeks to leave the army.

THERE is some uncertainty as to the date of the birth of Wellington, as there is with respect to the date of the birth of Napoleon. The evidence, however, is nearly conclusive that Napoleon was born on the 15th of August, 1769, and that Wellington was born on the 1st of May in the same year; "Providence," said Louis XVIII., "gave us this counterpoise." The family of the future soldier and statesman belonged to "the English in Ireland," as they have been called; it may be traced

back to Waleran de Wellesley, a Judge of the Anglo-Norman Colony of the Pale in the thirteenth century. The descendants of the Judge had no distinguished names; they were more fortunate than most of the "Old English'ry," and escaped the effects of confiscation and conquest; they were owners of large estates in Meath and Kildare when the Act of Settlement confirmed the Cromwellian forfeitures. The surname of Wellesley had, before this, been corrupted into that of Wesley about the time of the restoration of Charles II. Garret Wesley married a daughter of a gentleman of the name of Colley, of a family, also of English blood, which had been settled in the County of Kilkenny, since the reign of Henry V. The marriage of Garret having been childless, he transmitted his lands to a nephew, Richard Colley, on the condition of his taking the name and arms of Wesley; and Richard Colley Wesley, who, like many of the Colonial caste, had considerable borough influence in the Irish House of Commons, was created Baron Mornington in the Peerage of Ireland in 1747. His son Garret, not a man of superior parts, and remarkable only for his skill in music, which attracted the notice of George III., was made Earl of Mornington in 1760; he married a daughter of the House of Hill, a prominent House of the Anglo-Irish Colony; by her he had five sons and a daughter, the fourth son, Arthur, being the Wellington of another day. It may thus be observed that Wellington, as far as can be ascertained, had nothing in common with the native Irish race; no Celtic blood, probably, ran in his veins; his na-

ture was the very opposite of that of the Celt; he was a scion of the English conquerors settled in Ireland, identified with them in lineage and in faith; and through life he had strong sympathies with this order of men, the representatives of Protestant ascendency, as it was called.

In the case of Wellington, as in that of Napoleon, and indeed of many other illustrious men, the offspring inherited its best gifts from the maternal parent. Lady Mornington, left a widow in 1781, was a woman of no ordinary powers, and of very remarkable strength of character; but her nature was imperious and not genial; her temperament was rather stern and cold; we see these qualities in the greatest of her sons. It is a singular fact that she had no perception of what Arthur, even in boyhood, must have been; she thought him stupid and without a sign of promise. "I vow to God," she once exclaimed; "I don't know what I shall do with him." There was, in truth, no kind of sympathy between the mother and the son; in his early as in his later years, the domestic life of Wellington was not happy; this may, in part, account for what he was in the circle of home. The lad was sent for a short time to Eton, but unlike Richard, his eldest brother, a darling of Eton and Oxford tutors, and one of the greatest English masters of the Latin tongue, he made no mark at that celebrated school, though certainly he retained an affection for it; "the cricket field at Eton," he once said, "had its effect at Waterloo." We find Arthur next at a kind of military school at Angers, directed by a distinguished officer of French

engineers; Lady Mornington seems to have gratified his inclination in this; she had destined him for a small place in the Irish Excise; but "nothing would satisfy him but to go into the army." She sent him to Angers to learn his calling, contemptuously remarking that "he would be only food for powder." We know little or nothing about Wellington's life at Angers; but probably he read hard and with profit: many years afterwards he said to a friend that he "had made it a rule to work some hours at his books from a very early age." In 1787, he obtained his first commission; and, perhaps owing to family influence, passed rapidly through the lower grades of the service. He was raised to the rank of major within six years; this, for that age, was extremely quick promotion. We now begin to see what he really was; like Turenne, with whom he had some points in common, he became an excellent infantry officer, and when a captain, had his company in the best order; and he addressed himself especially to the mastery of the tactics of his arm, in which he has never, perhaps, been excelled, as Napoleon was pre-eminent in all that pertained to artillery. As he once observed in his characteristic fashion: "I was not so young as not to know that since I had undertaken a profession, I had better try to understand it. I believe that I owe most of my success to the attention I always paid to the inferior part of tactics as a regimental officer. There were very few men in the army who knew these details better than I did; it is the foundation of all military knowledge."

Having recently obtained a troop of dragoons,

Arthur Wesley, in the autumn of 1792, was placed on the staff of Lord Westmoreland, the head of the Irish Government. The social life of Dublin in those days was very brilliant; the Protestant aristocracy, proud of the Revolution of 1782, which had made their Parliament independent in name, gave free rein to pleasure carried to excess; their gaiety, their hospitalities, their high play, were famous. A young aide-de-camp of the Lord Lieutenant has always been a favourite in the Irish capital; Arthur Wesley took part in the State balls, the dinners, and the other festivities of the time, but he was hardly conspicuous among his brother officers. The traditions about him, when at the Castle, are few; two anecdotes, however, may be mentioned; he is said to have pointed out a house in the city, which commanded a number of leading streets, and to have advised that it should be fortified; and I have myself heard a veteran, in extreme old age, tell how he was near fighting a duel with the great future warrior, and how well it was that his pistol had not the chance of perhaps changing the fortunes of Europe! Wesley had entered the Irish House of Commons in 1790, as a member of the pocket borough of Trim, an appanage of his family in the eighteenth century, as was the case of five-sixths of the Irish boroughs, petty corporations, feeble and corrupt, the monoplies of the dominant lords of the soil. Nothing is known about his early parliamentary career; but we may perhaps guess what he may have thought, with characteristic common sense and judgment, of an assembly which was a mere caricature of the

greater assembly that had its seat at Westminster; which did not represent a fifth part of the Irish people; and which, though it contained many remarkable men, abounded in factions and bad elements; and was the instrument of an oligarchy of sect at the beck of the Castle. He belonged, however, to the party attached to the Government, which, practically, was supreme in College Green, and in fact was a dependent of the Lord Lieutenant; we may rest assured that he would have denounced Irish parliamentary reform at this time, as he denounced the great Reform Bill forty years afterwards. The period when he was a member of the Irish Parliament was one filled with portentous events, and of evil omen to Ireland and Great Britain alike. The French Revolution had shaken Ireland and her social structure to its base; Presbyterian Ulster was disaffected to the core, and was falling into the hands of the United Irishmen; Catholic Ireland, still downtrodden and oppressed, was beginning to stir with a dangerous movement; the institutions of the country, founded on an ascendency of race and creed, exclusive and unjust, were in no doubtful peril. At the same time, notwithstanding the efforts of Pitt, the Revolution was turning England against France; and there were many signs of a tremendous impending conflict.

When the Irish Parliament had assembled for the session of 1793, Arthur Wesley was put forward to second the Address to the Throne. A great "Roman Catholic Relief Bill," as it was named, was the principal measure before the House of Commons; even

now it has much historical interest. During a period of more than twenty years, the fetters which bound the Catholic Irish had been removed by degrees; they had been allowed to live in peace, in their own country, and even to acquire lands by purchase; they had been freed from the worst social disabilities imposed on them, but they were still almost without political power, — in fact, all but shut out from the pale of the State; and though the illustrious Grattan and his followers aimed at raising them to the level of the Protestants in their midst, a large majority at College Green were still opposed to their claims. The condition of Ireland, however, had alarmed Pitt, and, probably at the instigation of Burke, through life a champion of the Irish Catholic people, the Minister had resolved to bring in a measure for enlarging the rights of the Catholic Irish, and to carry it through the Irish Parliament by the means in his hands. The bill, like many other projects of the kind, revealed the ignorance of Ireland characteristic of British statesmen; it admitted, but with great and invidious exceptions, the Irish Catholic to certain offices in the State; but — and this was its most distinctive and worst feature — it gave the electoral franchise to the great body of the Irish peasantry — a priest-ridden multitude of Helot serfs — and closed the doors of Parliament to the Catholic peer and gentlemen, exactly reversing the course of what should have been a true policy. The measure, however, passed both Houses; the majority, if not without angry protests, being induced or bribed to give their assent; but it gave

rise to very able debates; more than one of the Opposition pointed out, with prophetic insight, what — even if it were delayed for years — would be the natural, perhaps the inevitable result, of conferring immense political power on the Catholic masses, and withholding it from their superiors and leaders. Wesley's speech on this occasion was confined to a few words; it was the speech of a young Castle official; but we may speculate if the predictions he heard at this time did not cross his mind when the Clare election of 1828 — a triumph won by the peasantry enfranchised in 1793 — extorted Catholic Emancipation from his reluctant hands. It deserves notice that he objected to the policy of letting Catholics into the Irish Parliament, on the ground only that this project might cause disunion, and not, as the school of Flood did, on the ground of principle; this is perhaps the first instance of the spirit of compromise, which was characteristic of the statesman of another age.

Wesley had left the Irish House of Commons within a few months. He had entered on his active military career in the early spring of 1794. He had been made lieutenant-colonel of the 33rd Foot through the influence of Lord Westmoreland and of his eldest brother, who had succeeded, of course, to his father's peerage; he sailed from Cork under the command of Lord Moira to take part in the great war which was being waged between the League of Europe and revolutionary France. The conflict had been a fierce struggle of opposing principles; the aristocracies and monarchies of the eighteenth cent-

ury had encountered a democracy formidable in its strength and its new ideas: a great nation, apparently on the brink of destruction, had baffled a coalition which seemed impossible to resist, had struck down a host of domestic foes, and was now advancing on a flood tide of victory. The situation, nevertheless, might have been made desperate for France in her agony in the later months of 1793. After Neerwinden, the allied armies had reached the camp of Cæsar and were only a few marches from Paris, with weak and beaten levies in their path; they could, without difficulty, have seized the capital and mastered its Jacobin rulers in their seat. France was being invaded on all her borders; a civil war was raging in the West; Marseilles and Lyons were in revolt; Toulon was assailed by a great hostile fleet; the Girondin rising stirred whole provinces. But the Allies were divided in mind and jealous of each other; there was no real unity in their councils; their military operations were ill-directed; disseminated upon an immense front, they wasted their power in useless sieges, they never combined their vast forces against the common enemy. France was given what was, above all, needed, time; a terrible dictatorship, the Committee of Public Safety, laid hold of the resources of the country and of its head, Paris, and summoned the mass of the nation to arms. Frightful as the Reign of Terror was, its results were decisive. The fourteen armies of the Republic stemmed the tide of invasion; the Allies were discomfited on the northern and the eastern frontiers; the insurrection of La

Vendée sank in blood and ashes; the genius of Bonaparte saved Toulon; the rebel cities of the South fell; the Girondins and their adherents were crushed. Before the summer of 1794, the war had turned decisively against the coalition. While Prussia was hesitating in the East, Carnot had flung armed masses into the Low Countries: the Duke of York had been defeated near Tournay; Jourdan had won a great battle on the plains of Fleurus; and while the Duke was in full retreat in Belgium, his Austrian colleagues were making off for the Rhine. The League of Europe was, in a word, fast breaking up; the Republic was advancing beyond old France; her arms and her evangel of liberty were spreading her influence far and near.

Wesley, even before this time, seems to have been recognised by his superiors as a capable officer. The 33rd Regiment was a model corps; its organisation and discipline were extremely good; it was a specimen of the admirable work and care of a commander who, in his own words, "was always on the spot, saw everything and did everything himself." Lord Moira placed the young colonel at the head of a brigade; Wesley had soon given proof of military insight and skill. The Duke of York, driven from Oudenarde and the adjoining country, was now in full retreat to the Lower Scheldt, with Pichegru and Moreau on his track; Moira and his contingent had landed at Ostend; Wesley urged his chief to re-embark, and to join the Duke by sea, obviously the proper and the only safe course. Moira, however, with remarkable want of judgment, marched

from Ostend behind the screen of the Great Canal, exposing his flank to a victorious enemy; he fortunately escaped, but was in grave danger; Wesley actually re-embarked with his brigade and had come into line with the Duke before his commander. It is unnecessary to retrace the events of the campaign that followed, glorious to France, most disastrous to the arms of the Allies. The French fortresses which had fallen the year before were easily recaptured after the late defeats of the League; Pichegru, Moreau, and Jourdan had erelong entered Brussels and taken possession of the whole of Belgium; the Duke of York, isolated and without his supports, retreated behind the Lower Meuse and the Wahal; the Austrian Clerfait, beaten on the Ourthe and the Roer, with difficulty escaped across the Rhine by Cologne. The French now advanced into Holland in triumph. The Prince of Orange and the aristocratic party endeavoured for a time to make a stand and with part of the army to help the Duke, but the great body of the people had had sympathies for many years with France; it had been leavened with the Revolutionary hopes and doctrines; it welcomed the invaders as liberators from the yoke of the Stadtholders, and as bringing them freedom at the point of their swords. The French armies swept over the States like a torrent, meeting hardly any resistance on their way; fortress after fortress opened its gates; the line of the Wahal was lost; the Duke of York, who had gone back to England and given his command to a German colleague, had left his army in critical straits; it was ultimately compelled to fall

back behind the Ems, and, discomfited, to embark for England from Bremen. Meanwhile a winter of extraordinary severity had set in, the great rivers of Holland were congealed and ceased to afford any lines of defence, and the campaign ended with the capture of Amsterdam and of the greater part of the renowned Dutch fleet, boarded, strange to say, by squadrons of Pichegru's hussars.

Wesley played a not undistinguished part in this unfortunate contest in the Low Countries. He covered the retreat of the Army, on more than one occasion; beat off the enemy, in a bloody struggle round Boxtel, a village not far from the Wahal, and was repeatedly thanked, by his superiors, for his good services. He has left experiences of what he witnessed, and has written a few words on the state of the British Army at this time. The troops, true to their nature, were stubborn and brave: many of the regiments were well ordered, and did their duty admirably in a most severe trial. But the tactics of the Army were antiquated and bad; its formations were cumbrous and heavy in the extreme; it was ill commanded through nearly all its grades; "no one knew how to manage it," as a collective military force. The Army, in fact, at this period, had sunk to the lowest point of inferiority seen in its history. It gave proof, no doubt, of the great qualities of the race; it often beat the French soldiery in fair fight, fired as these were with patriotic passions, and formidable as they have always been in success. But it had been hastily recruited, and had few seasoned men; its mechanism and organisation were very de-

fective; it had suffered from the economising policy of Pitt, who would not prepare for war until the last moment. Its leaders, from the Commander-in-Chief to the subaltern, had little or no knowledge of the military art, and gave little attention to their profession; the grossest favouritism prevailed in the service; political interest, jobbing, anything but merit, were the passports to even the highest promotion. The Army, in a word, was full of abuses and defects; Wesley remarked that the officers in 1794 were careless and idle; that outpost duties were miserably performed; that incapacity was conspicuous even in the highest places. This, too, was nearly the view of Nelson about this time; and in truth, after Saratoga and Yorktown, the British Army stood ill in opinion in England, and throughout Europe. Arthur Wesley appears to have had a conviction that he had no opportunity to rise in such a calling; he was disgusted with what he had seen in the Netherlands, and actually applied for a civil post; for he said, "I see the manner in which military offices are filled." Propitious Fortune, however, refused his prayer; "he was to be shown to her," like the Roman, in a very different aspect. The destinies of the greatest men have thus hung upon seeming trifles; Cromwell had turned his eyes to New England before the great Civil War; Napoleon sought a mission to the Turk when on the eve of commanding the Army of Italy.

CHAPTER II

CAREER IN INDIA

Wesley fails to get a post in the Civil Service—He is prevented from going in an expedition to the West Indies—He is sent with the 33rd to India—His memorandum on military affairs, the first instance of his sagacious views on this subject—Lord Mornington made Governor-General—The two brothers in India—State of our Empire and of the Company at this conjuncture—The name of Wesley changed back to that of Wellesley—Operations against Tippoo Sahib—Arthur Wellesley, as a rule, on the side of peace—His failure at an outpost—Fall of Seringapatam—Settlement of Mysore—Wellesley made Governor—His administration—Defeat of Dhoondiah Waugh—Baird sent to Egypt instead of Wellesley—The Mahratta War—Assaye, great ability shown by Wellesley in the battle—Lord Lake's operations—Defeat of Monson—Wellesley leaves India for England.

WE know nothing of what occurred as to Arthur Wesley's attempt to enter the Civil Service of the State, save that, happily, it was not attended with success. Fortune, too, smiled on him in another instance; he embarked, with the 33rd, to take part in an expedition against the French settlements in the West Indies, objects of British attack since the beginning of the war. A tempest, however, put a stop to the enterprise; many of the transports, the "wooden coffins" of those

days, were wrecked, a considerable number of the troops, perished and the 33rd and its chief were soon afterward despatched to the East. Wesley on the voyage devoted studious hours to acquiring a knowledge of the affairs of India; his natural sagacity, even now remarkable, made what he had thus mastered of sterling value. He landed at Calcutta in the spring of 1797; our rule in the Peninsula was being already threatened by rumours of war gathering in on many sides; the reins of government were in the hands of Sir John Shore, one of the Viceroys, who adopted a timid policy in Hindustan before our Empire had been fully established. The Governor-General, however, did not perceive any immediate danger; by this time, we were at war with Spain; St. Vincent had been won by the genius of Nelson; Wesley's services were first put in request for a projected attack against Manila, the capital of the Philippine Islands, the scene of one of our triumphs in the Seven Years' War. The expedition never took place, but preparations for it gave to Wesley, then in his twenty-eighth year, his first opportunity to place on record his clear and farsighted views on military affairs, conspicuous for their mastery of details of all kinds, which were distinctive features of his capacity in command. Erelong a change had passed over the situation in the East: the Peninsula had been stirred by echoes of French victories in the West; French ambition and intrigue were at work against our rule; Tippoo Sahib was intent on recovering the dominions he had lost; some of our allies were hesitating, even ready to declare against

us. In these circumstances, Sir John Shore was succeeded by Wesley's eldest brother, Mornington. The new Governor-General, who had served on the Board of Control, but whose great powers had not yet been displayed, even if he was well acquainted with Indian affairs, reached Calcutta in May, 1798, at the very moment when Napoleon was about to embark for Egypt and to make an effort to descend from the Nile on the Indies, an enterprise which, extravagant as it may appear, he maintained, even at St. Helena, was quite feasible. The youthful conqueror had already negotiated with Tippoo Sahib, and certainly had designs against our Empire in the East; but as he was baffled by Nelson in the Bay of Aboukir, so it was his destiny that Richard and Arthur Wesley should place that Empire on foundations which could defy his genius, and make subsequent plans of invasion hopeless, It may here be added that about this time the two brothers reverted to the old name of the family; the more aristocratic Wellesley replaced the more plebeian Wesley.

When Lord Mornington was made chief Governor, England had become the dominant Power in India, but our Empire was even yet by no means assured. The supremacy of the Moguls was a thing of the past; a mere phantom held idle state at Delhi; the Peninsula was ruled by the great Company, or was parcelled out among Princes of different races, overawed by the strangers from across the ocean, but disunited and usually at feud with each other. The vast basin of the Ganges was completely in our hands; the Presidencies of Madras and Bom-

bay, once the seats of insignificant trading factories, had extended far inland from either sea, and embraced large provinces under subject chiefs; Oude, a kingdom in itself, had been reduced to vassalage; our authority was felt by the tribes and the peoples under the shadows of the Himalayas, and along the course of the Indus. The arms of France and the genius of Dupleix, for a time threatening our very existence in the East, had failed against Clive and the Lords of the Sea; a succession of victories, sometimes of an extraordinary kind, Plassy, Wandewash, Porto-Novo, and many more, had proved that, even against enormous odds, the islanders of Europe could crush Asiatics in fair fight. An Empire, in fact, to which history can show no parallel, had been built up, in the space of less than half a century, out of the wrecks of imposing but declining dynasties, by the capacity and craft of two or three master minds; and a handful of Englishmen scattered in their midst, had become the rulers of populations of many millions, or kept them down by the terror of the English name. Our supremacy in India, however, was new, and, not yet deep-rooted, it was menaced by native foes, vanquished but still able to strike, and by one of the great Powers of Europe. It depended in part on the faith of still doubtful allies; it owed, in some measure, its existence and its strength to the jealousies and the discords of still great potentates, who, though hostile to each other for years, might, should an opportunity arise, combine their arms against it. Tippoo Sahib, from the table-land of Mysore, was ready, as Hyder Ali had been, to

descend on our territories round Madras and Bombay, and, at the head of a great army, to avenge his defeats at the hands of Cornwallis. Revolutionary France had not forgotten the efforts of Dupleix; she was eager to contend again for empire in Hindustan. Napoleon, we have seen, had stretched a hand to Tippoo; French officers had organised the forces of several of the Indian Princes, and were awaiting the moment of a French invasion. The Viceroy of the Deccan, called the Nizam, was the only powerful ally on whom we could reckon, and even he was by no means trustworthy; and the great confederacy of the Mahrattas, at one time friendly, was gradually becoming all but openly hostile. Tippoo and the Mahrattas were the most formidable of the native Powers; they had often been at war with each other, and the chiefs of the Mahrattas were not united; but events were tending to make them the foes of England.

The internal government of our Indian dominions, though very different from what it has been for years, was now infinitely better than it was at its origin. Burke was never just to the rule of the Company; it was never that of a "mere rapacious, peculating, and unsteady despotism"; its "possession of Hindustan had not been like that of the ourang outang and the hyæna." But, as has usually happened when a small body of conquerors, the offspring of a great Imperial race, subdues whole nations of races of a less powerful type, our ascendency had not been gained without deeds of violence and wrong; and the Company's reign, at its be-

ginning, had this special evil feature: it was that of adventurers who made India their footstool, in order to amass money, and to return to England to spend it. Long before the Wellesleys had made their presence felt at Calcutta, crimes such as those which, in a few instances, can be fairly laid to the charge of Clive and Hastings, had become only memories condemned by history; the measure meted out to Omichund and Nuncomar, the Rohilla War, the oppression of the Princesses of Oude, were no longer possible under existing conditions. The days, too had passed away for ever, when the administration of the Company could be described as a "combination of rapine and fraud"; of "setting up kingdoms for sale" and of "breaking treaties"; when its servants could be called "birds of prey and of passage"; when whole districts were given up to monopolists, who starved terrified populations in the midst of plenty; when traders made millions by unlawful gains, and formed a multitude of relentless Shylocks; when "boys in uniform," in Burke's language, could riot in tyranny without a thought of justice; when the steady, systematic, and grasping rule of the Englishman was more dreaded than the swoop of the Mahratta horsemen. The Company was still the chief power in India, but it had been brought under the control of the State; the substance of government and the authority of the sword had passed into the hands of proconsuls, who had not abused their high office, and usually had been worthy of it; immense internal reforms had been made, conceived in a good spirit, if not always wise;

a system of law had been established, and was administered by judges, sometimes mistaken in their views, but upright: the affairs of the Peninsula were, even more than now, subject to the vigilant scrutiny and the severe eye of Parliament. Nevertheless the traces of the evil past had not vanished; if there was little open violence, there was much secret corruption; the functionaries of the Company, nay, British officers, were too often accessible to the worst kinds of bribes; in the administration of the ordinary affairs of life, the native had little chance against the Englishman, should their interests happen to come into conflict. The dominant race was still dominant in a bad sense; the subject races were, in its eyes, little better than serfs.

Lord Mornington had hardly been placed at the head of affairs in India, when the designs of Tippoo Sahib had become manifest. The Governor of the Isle of France, Malartic, had issued a proclamation to the effect that the French Republic and the ruler of Mysore had combined to expel the English intruders from Hindustan; Tippoo, it was known, was in communication with him. Mornington one of the series of the great proconsuls, of whom Hastings and Dalhousie are conspicuous types, was desirous to seize the occasion, and to strike down Tippoo at once; but the intended expedition was delayed for months. The finances of the Company, diminished by recent wars, and by the expenses of administration of different kinds, were by no means in a prosperous state; and, as always happened, there was a party among the Directors thinking of

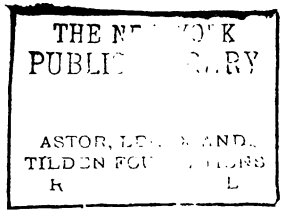
dividends only, and eager for peace at any price. Arthur Wellesley never subscribed to these ignoble views; but, as has often been the case with illustrious soldiers, he did not wish to precipitate war; he had a stronger will than his more accomplished brother, and exercised great influence over him; he urged Mornington to treat with Tippoo, and to afford him a golden bridge to escape, We see here the first instance of the different lines of policy recommended or adopted by these two eminent men; Richard Wellesley, as a rule, was for bold, even aggressive measures; Arthur, for caution, compromise, and, if possible, peace. Arthur, however, did not hesitate when it had become apparent that a league of foreign enemies and of native powers, of which Tippoo was to be the head, was being formed against our rule in India. The Nizam, we have seen, was our strongest, perhaps our only ally; as had been the case with several of the Indian Princes, he had employed Frenchmen to organise and train his army; this was a well-equipped force of about 16,000 men; its French chiefs had been won over by the intrigues of Tippoo. A mutiny, however, had broken out among the troops; the officers were powerless; the Nizam was willing to shake off the yoke of allies he feared, and to throw in his lot with the Governor-General: at the instance of Arthur Wellesley his army was suddenly disarmed, and the French officers were made prisoners of war. The Nizam now openly declared for England; Mornington made a treaty with the nominal head of the Mahratta chiefs, binding them not to take up

arms in behalf of Tippoo; every effort was made to fit out an army sufficiently formidable to invade and conquer Mysore. The stroke which Wellesley had advised had proved masterly; it was an early example of his judgment and insight in war.

Tippoo may not have heard of the destruction of the French fleet at the Nile; he had been buoyed up by a pledge given by Napoleon that "an invincible army was on the march to join him." All efforts at negotiation having failed, it was resolved to invade Mysore upon two lines: General Stuart with about 6000 men, advancing from the seaboard of Bombay, General Harris with a somewhat larger force, moving from the low country around Madras. Wellesley was still the chief of the 33rd; an accident gave him the temporary command of the column of Harris—that general had been detained for some weeks in the rear; and the admirable arrangements the colonel made for the troops elicited from his superior a tribute of well-merited praise.[1] Towards the middle of February, 1799, the Army of the Nizam, about 15,000 strong, had effected its junction with the

[1] This was the first occasion when Wellesley was in any kind of independent command. I quote these remarks of General Harris: "I have much satisfaction in acquainting your Lordship, that the very handsome appearance and perfect discipline of the troops under the orders of the Hon. Col. Wellesley do honour to themselves and to him, while the judicious and masterly arrangements as to supplies, which opened an abundant free market, and inspired confidence in dealers of every description, were no less creditable to Colonel Wellesley than advantageous to the public service, and deservedly entitle him to very marked approbation."—*Wellesley's Dispatches*, i., 425. Wellington's conduct in the Peninsular War was thus prefigured.

ROBERT STUART, VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH 2ND MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY.
(After the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence.)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force of Harris; that chief, appreciating the conduct of his young lieutenant, placed this large contingent under the command of Wellesley, a selection beyond all question the best, but which was bitterly resented by General Baird, a distinguished and a much senior officer. The main Army was soon on its march through the passes between the hills that surround the uplands of Mysore; but the vast bodies of camp followers, and the masses of baggage always in the train of Asiatic forces,—*ingens belli lues*, in the phrase of Tacitus,—considerably retarded the invader's movements, and their transport service well-nigh broke down. Tippoo fell on Stuart in the first instance, but he was defeated with heavy loss; he then attacked Harris at a place called Malavelly, a short distance only from his great fortified capital, Seringapatam. A sharp engagement was bravely fought, Wellesley being in command of the left wing of the Army; he turned Tippoo's right and drove him, routed, from the field. The march of Harris, however, continued to be slow, owing to the many difficulties in his way and the prodigious burden of his impedimenta: he was not before Seringapatam until the first week of April.

Tippoo had had time to prepare for a defence. Seringapatam, he felt sure, could defy his enemy. Yet Cornwallis had appeared before the place a few years before; his army had stormed a great entrenched camp, which had been made to cover the fortress; Tippoo, fearing an assault, showed himself willing to treat. He had now assembled the flower of the army of Mysore, about 22,000 men, to make

a resistance, from which he expected a triumph; more than 200 guns crowned the ramparts and bastions. The attacking force was about 35,000 strong, with 100 guns. Before the regular approaches were made, an incident occurred, which was one of the rare examples of failure in Wellesley's military career. There were two outposts held by the enemy, about 4000 yards from the walls; the fire of these annoyed our men; one was successfully attacked and occupied; Wellesley and the 33rd were beaten off from the other. The effort, in fact, had been made after dark and without sufficient care; Wellesley has left it on record that this reverse taught him "never to attack by night a post that had not been reconnoitred by day." The work was captured without difficulty within twenty-four hours; but, owing to a mischance, Wellesley was late in appearing on the scene; Harris saved him from anything like a reprimand; but during the operations that followed he was rather under a cloud. This is not the place to describe the siege of Seringapatam, one of the innumerable instances in which the best men of the East have gone down before British valour; in truth, Wellesley had little part in the attack; he was left in the rear, at the head of the reserve. The fortress rose upon an islet in the Cavery, and was formidable from its position and its means of defence; but Tippoo had chiefly directed his attention to the northern front, that before which Cornwallis had drawn up his forces; Harris, who conducted the operations with no little skill, concentrated his strength upon the

southern front, where the fortified defences were comparatively weak. Fire opened from the trenches in the last days of April; ramparts, curtains, and forts were swept by a tempest of shot; sallies of the horsemen of Mysore made no impression on their foes; a breach was declared practicable on the 2nd of May. On the 4th, Baird led some five thousand men, partly auxiliaries, partly choice British troops, to the assault; as always, he proved himself to be a brave and able soldier. Crossing the bed of the Cavery, at this moment dry, and disregarding the fire directed against them, the assailants had soon mastered the breach, though they encountered a fierce and stern resistance, Tippoo fighting hand-to-hand at the head of his guards. The ramparts had been won; but there was still an obstacle, in a wide fosse, which appeared impassable; nothing, however, could stop Baird and his exulting men; they forced their way across on planks and beams; the garrison was driven from point to point; its remains surrendered after a murderous conflict. Tippoo had struggled "like an Indian tiger," to the last; he had called on his warriors to do or die; his dead body was found amidst heaps of the slain.

Baird struck the decisive stroke at Seringapatam; he had given proof of heroism and resource at the imminent deadly breach. Having left the camp to make his report to the General-in-Chief, Wellesley was placed in temporary command of the city; scenes were witnessed like those which, at this period, always occurred after a successful assault. Wellesley dealt with the subject with the grim, cynical coolness

only the prelude to future conflicts. Lord Mornington was made Marquis Wellesley for these brilliant achievements; but the peace party in the Company uttered vexatious protests; nay, affronted the Governor-General in many ways; unworthy murmurs were even heard in the House of Commons. India, however, was in too critical a state to permit Lord Wellesley to leave his post, and the remaining years of his rule were marked by a great advance of British power in the East. The settlement of the kingdom of Mysore was the first subject that needed attention; it was effected in the manner of which the Roman Republic gave many examples in like instances, and which had been a feature, too, of our policy in Hindustan. Hyder Ali and Tippoo had been usurpers; a child, the heir of a Rajah they had dispossessed, was restored to the best part of his ancestral domains; the other parts were divided between the Company, the Nizam, and the suzerain of the Mahratta League. The sons of Tippoo, however, received a large indemnity; it deserves especial notice that Arthur Wellesley was the chief counsellor of his brother in making these wise arrangements, and contributed more than any one else to a generous act of justice. Arthur was now made military Governor of Mysore; though a civilian Resident was placed by his side, the whole administration of this great territory passed into his hands. He was for a short time engaged in a fierce struggle with a predatory chief, who had been a lieutenant of Tippoo, and who, gathering together irregular bands of armed men, had proclaimed himself "the

king of the world," and was threatening the borders of the lands of Mysore; but Wellesley literally hunted Dhoondia Waugh down in a succession of marches of extreme celerity, a characteristic of most of his operations in the East. Wellesley's government of Mysore marks a turning-point in the administration of our rule in Hindustan. He insisted on having a free hand to act, and on being exempted from the control of the Company, — "for I know that the whole is a system of job and corruption from beginning to end, of which I and my troops would be made the instruments"; the results were in the highest degree significant. An admirable change passed over the service; integrity was enforced and became general; the practice of taking presents and *douceurs* was stopped; the spirit of Wellesley's conduct is seen in these words addressed to a soldier under his command: "In respect to the bribe offered to you and myself, I am surprised that any man in the character of a British officer should not have given the Rajah to understand that the offer would be considered an insult." It is unnecessary to say that what was done at Mysore was done, but on a large scale, at Calcutta. Lord Wellesley had set an example by refusing to accept the great sum of £100,000, as his share in the prize money of Seringapatam; like his brother he made war on administrative misconduct of all kinds, especially on the taking gifts from the native princes and chiefs. It has been truly remarked: "Of all the changes effected by the brothers Wellesley, none was so vital — so valuable to British

ascendency in India — as the end which, between them, they put to the old system of private peculation and corruption. The administrative body became for the first time what it had long been in name, the Honourable East India Company."[1]

The great events which had occurred in the West had, meanwhile, made their influence felt in Hindustan. Napoleon had become the ruler of France; Marengo and Hohenlinden had been fought; the Continent had succumbed at the peace of Luneville. But England, unaided, maintained the struggle; the French army in Egypt was imprisoned within its conquest; a British expedition was being made ready to reach the Nile. Lord Wellesley resolved to second this enterprise; he had placed his brother at the head of a force intended to descend on the Isle of France; but he directed this, which he considerably increased, to take part in our operations in Egypt; he made Baird the commander of this detachment, Arthur Wellesley not being of sufficient rank in the service. This irritated the young Governor of Mysore, and even caused a coolness between the brothers; and yet fortune favoured Arthur again, — the victory of Abercromby had been won before Baird appeared on the scene, and he took no part in the triumph of our arms. The conquest of Mysore had been consolidated by this time; it had greatly strengthened our authority in the East; as a natural consequence, it brought us in contact with the powers of India, which were still un-

[1] Sir H. Maxwell's *Life of Wellington*, i., 72.

subdued. The confederacy of the Mahrattas was the chief of these; it was supreme in the dominions which the mighty Sevajee had carved out of the wrecks of the Mogul Empire; springing originally from a race of freebooters, spread along the hills of the western coast, it now extended to the confines of Bengal and the Deccan. The head of the League was called the Peishwa; but his authority, I have said, was nominal only, as was the case of many dynasties in Hindustan; real power centred in independent princes, lords of a vast territory reaching nearly from Bombay to the Upper Ganges. The Rajah of Berar held a great province around his capital, Nagpore; the Guikwar was ruler of Baroda and a large adjoining region; Scindiah was the master of an immense domain between the Nerbudda and the Chambal; Holkar, more to the north, occupied the country on the banks of the Jumna. All these potentates could place great armies on foot, those of Scindiah and Holkar disciplined by French officers; their light cavalry, like that of Hyder Ali, was an arm not to be despised. If united they might have been irresistible in the field; but they were always divided, and often at war with each other; they had been our doubtful allies or our secret foes; but they had never combined to challenge our Empire. It was the fortune of England, as it had been of Rome,[1] to rise to

[1] Compare the pregnant language of Tacitus. De moribus Germanorum XXXIII. "Maneat quæso, duretque gentibus, si non amor nostri . . . at certe odium sui, quando, urgentibus Imperii fatis, nihil jam præstare Fortuna majus potest, quam hostium discordiam."

supremacy in many lands, owing to the discord of races which stood in her path.

It is unnecessary to comment on the events which ended in a war with the chief Mahratta Princes. Lord Wellesley and the leading men at Calcutta, foreseeing that a rupture could not, perhaps, be avoided, and not superior to sagacious statecraft, — true to the principle "divide and rule," they had won the Guikwar of Baroda over, — were desirous of striking when an occasion offered; Arthur Wellesley characteristically condemned this policy, and even wrote of it in no measured language: "They breathe nothing but war, and appear to have adopted some of the French principles on that subject. They seem to think that because the Mahrattas do not choose to ally themselves with us more closely . . . it is perfectly justifiable and proper that we should go to war with them."[1] The animosities, however, of the Mahratta Princes precipitated a conflict already impending. The Peishwa, reduced almost to a puppet, like the representative of the Imperial Moguls, had turned to the Governor-General to seek his aïd; but he had been overawed by Scindiah who had practically made him a vassal; the negotiations had proved fruitless. The influence, however, of Scindiah over his suzerain in name provoked the jealousy and suspicion of Holkar; he took the field with a great army, defeated Scindiah and the Peishwa in a decisive battle, and had soon seized the city of Poona, the supposed

[1] *Supplementary Despatches* ii., 255–258. Sir H. Maxwell's *Life of Wellington*, i., 51.

seat of the Mahratta power. The Peishwa appealed to British protection; he signed the treaty of Bassein with Lord Wellesley; Stuart, with a considerable army, was despatched from the frontier of Mysore, and Colonel Stevenson, with a body of the Nizam's auxiliaries, to avenge our ally and punish his enemies; Wellesley now raised to the rank of General, was placed in command of a detachment under Stuart's orders. As usual, advancing with great celerity, Wellesley recaptured Poona, and made Holkar retreat northwards; the Peishwa returned in state to his capital. But the presence, perhaps, of a common danger had drawn Scindiah and Holkar together; they induced the Rajah of Berar to join them; a large army, of which Scindiah was the head, was assembled to confront the islanders on the Mahratta frontier. Hostilities had now begun in earnest; Lord Lake had marched across the Jumna against Holkar, and had compelled that chief to defend his provinces. Wellesley had been given the chief command of our forces round Poona, with full powers to treat with Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar. He made a real effort to negotiate; but he was forced with reluctance to draw the sword. The words he addressed to Scindiah were characteristic of the man: "I offered you peace on terms of equality, and honourable to all parties; you have chosen war and are responsible for all consequences."[1]

The campaign had begun in the summer of 1803. On the 8th of August, Wellesley, at the head of

[1] *Despatches* i., 287.

some 13,000 men,—5000 of these were Indian troops,—advanced against Ahmednagar, a fortified town commanding the roads from Poona into the country inland. The place fell after a sharp resistance; the British General marched northwards to effect a junction with Stevenson, who, perhaps 6000 strong, had marched from the Deccan to meet his superior. The two forces, diminished by some detachments, came into line on the 21st of September; the enemy, it was known, was not distant; Wellesley resolved to fall upon him as quickly as possible. Two passes led through a range of hills which separated him from the hostile armies; each was at least seven or eight miles from the other. Wellesley ordered Stevenson to advance by the eastern pass, while the General-in-Chief advanced on the west. In pure strategy this was a false movement, which might have been fatal before a great chief of Europe; but it gave Wellesley increased freedom of action; the result justified a decision which he always defended. On the 23rd the British Commander—he had, perhaps, been ill-served by his cavalry scouts—learned that the united forces of Scindiah and the Rajah, 30,000 footmen and 20,000 horse, had taken a position only a few miles distant. Wellesley had but 8000 men in hand, as the division of Stevenson had not joined him, but he instantly and rightly resolved to attack; a retreat, he probably argued, would cause his ruin. The position, however, of the enemy, enormously superior in force as he was, was well chosen, and formidable in the extreme. His armies were covered in front by the stream of

the Kistna, flowing between rocky banks, and seemingly without a ford; his left flank and rear were protected by the Juah, and in part by the village of Assaye: it would be very difficult to dislodge him from these points of vantage. His troops, too, made an imposing show; masses of infantry stood in well-ordered array, thousands of horsemen filled the surrounding plains; more than a hundred guns were drawn up in grim batteries. But Wellesley knew how immense was the difference between the British and the Asiatic soldier; the odds against him were, no doubt, prodigious; but they were less than those which Clive had faced at Plassy, and, as in the case of Clive, the course of daring was the course of prudence. So Hannibal had exclaimed two thousand years before when he beheld a multitudinous host of the East, brought within the reach of a few legions of Rome: "Yes that is a brave army, and a brave show; it will be enough for the Romans, greedy as they are."

Having reconnoitred the ground with care, Wellesley quickly made his dispositions for the attack. The enemy's cavalry was his most formidable arm; its resplendent masses spread far on his right; his less trustworthy infantry held his left; the British General resolved to turn and to fall on this wing. An accident, indicating Wellesley's admirable *coup d'œil* on the field, determined his well-designed purpose; a village on his side of the Kistna rose opposite to Assaye on the other side; despite the assurances of his Indian guides, he calculated that there must be a ford connecting the two: his movements

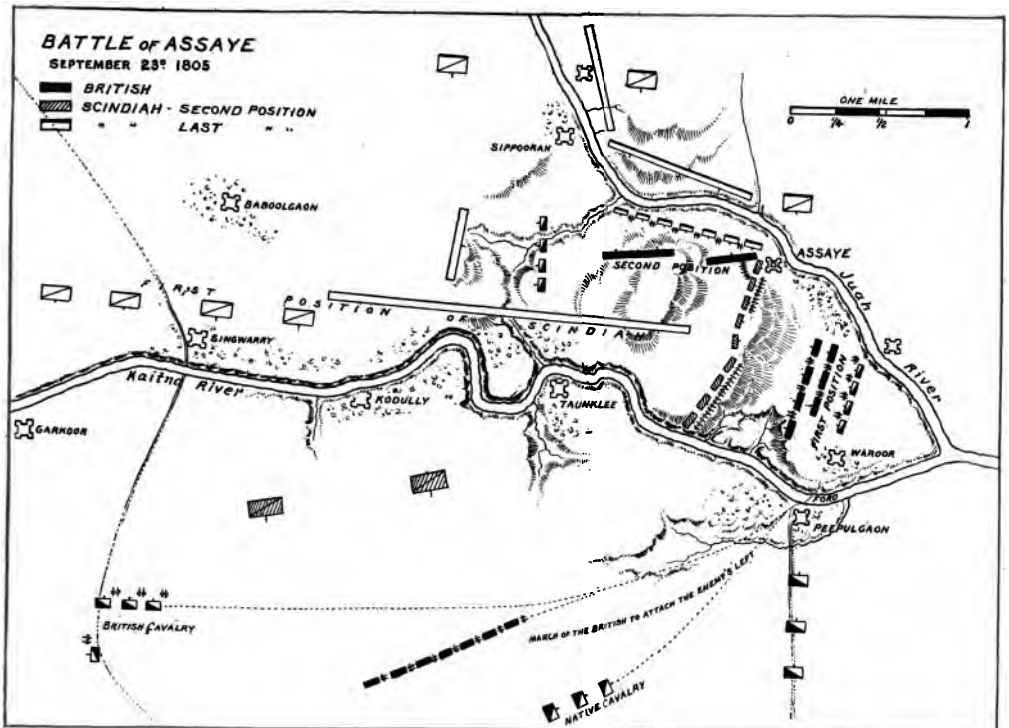
were made upon this assumption.[1] His little army, with only seventeen guns, made a long flank march across the front of the enemy, covered indeed by the Kistna, but dangerously exposed had Scindiah been a capable chief; it was, however, not molested in this critical march; its advanced guard had soon safely mastered the ford. The hostile commanders had missed the occasion; they had not made an attempt to get over the river, and to fall on their adversary's imperilled flank; they only effected a great change of front, their inferior infantry filling the space between the Kistna, the Juah, and Assaye; their fine cavalry was rendered well-nigh useless. Wellesley, his whole force now across the Kistna, advanced rapidly against foes showing signs of weakness; he directed his main effort against the Mahratta right: the result was hardly for a moment doubtful. His few guns, indeed, were nearly silenced; a destructive fire thinned his line as it pressed forward; but a single Highland regiment, backed by a body of native troops, carried everything before it at the point of the bayonet; the routed enemy was soon in headlong flight. On Wellesley's right the struggle was more stern and prolonged; the officer in command, mistaking his orders, attacked Assaye, making a circuitous move-

[1] Wellington's only remark on this fine tactical inspiration was: "That was common sense. When one is strongly intent on an object, common sense will usually direct one to the right means." Napoleon (*Corr.*, xxxii., 117,) thus commented on a somewhat similar movement of Turenne: "Cette circonstance ne paraît rien; cependant c'est ce rien qui est un des indices du génie de la guerre."

ment; a gap was opened in the British line; a few of the Mahratta squadrons made a brilliant charge. But Wellesley pushed forward his handful of horsemen; the enemy was driven back in defeat; Assaye was stormed by the 78th Highlanders; as on the left, the bayonet swept away every foe on the right. Scindiah's army was soon in full retreat; it had lost all its guns and 4000 or 5000 men killed and wounded; an admirably planned attack, against enormous odds, had led to a most decisive victory.

The operations of Wellesley at Assaye set at naught the maxims of the military art, as these are drawn from European warfare. He ought not, according to these principles, to have detached Stevenson and divided his forces; he ought not to have attacked in the absence of his lieutenant, with only a part of a very small army, insignificant in size compared with its enemy; he ought not to have made a long flank march, so to speak, under Scindiah's beard, and to have forded a river in the face of overwhelming numbers; these moves would have been fatal against an able general and really good troops. Nevertheless, Wellesley adopted the true course; a hundred fields had shown that the armed swarms of the East could not make a stand against the discipline of the West, however great the seeming disproportion of strength; his decision was that of a master of war, and his conduct in the battle deserves the highest praise. He acted like Miltiades at Marathon, like Alexander before Arbela, like Colin Campbell and Havelock, during the great Mutiny; the children of Shem, in all ages, save in a few

instances, have been no match, in a fair fight, for the children of Japheth. And had he retreated, he would have been lost; Scindiah's horsemen would have crossed the Kistna, would have hemmed in and at last destroyed the small force that alone stood in their way; nothing would ultimately have prevailed against their overpowering numbers. A notable example of what such a retreat must have been was unfortunately given a few months afterwards. I shall glance at Lord Lake's operations against the Mahratta chiefs: here I shall only refer to what happened to one of his best lieutenants. In the summer of 1804, Lake, a very able but somewhat incautious chief, had moved forward Colonel Monson with 4000 or 5000 men, to a great distance beyond the main army; and Monson had pushed forward outside the positions he had been directed to hold in the lands of Malwa. Holkar instantly prepared to cut his enemy off; he reached the Chambal, no doubt, in immensely superior numbers; and had Monson attacked like Wellesley at Assaye — and certainly he had a better chance — he might have plucked safety, nay, a brilliant triumph, out of danger: most unhappily he fell back before his antagonist; one of the most calamitous of retreats followed; the small British division was all but cut to pieces and ruined in a march of hundreds of miles; a mere shattered wreck drifted under the walls of Agra. The comment of Wellesley was brief but decisive: "These are woful examples of the risk to be incurred by advancing too far without competent supplies, and of the danger of attempting


BATTLE of ASSAYE
SEPTEMBER 23d 1805
BRITISH
SCINDIAH - SECOND POSITION
" " LAST " "
ONE MILE
0 ¼ ½ 1
SIPPOORAN
BABOOLGAON
ASSAYE
SECOND POSITION
Juah River
FIRST POSITION OF SCINDIA
SINGWARRY
Kaitna River
KODULLY
TAUHKLEE
GARKGOR
FIRST POSITION
WARGOR
FORD
PEEPULGAON
BRITISH CAVALRY
MARCH OF THE BRITISH TO ATTACH THE ENEMY'S LEFT
NATIVE CAVALRY

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to retreat before such an army as Holkar's. He would have done much better to attack Holkar at once, and he would probably have put an end to the war."[1]

Wellesley did not attempt to pursue the defeated army; we may, perhaps, see here one of his peculiarities in war; his were not the lightning strokes of Napoleon, in annihilating an enemy beaten in the field. But he successfully closed a very brilliant campaign. Stevenson, having joined him after Assaye, was despatched to overrun Scindiah's country; he captured two of the Prince's strongholds; negotiations ensued, but they came to nothing. Wellesley and Stevenson having come into line, they now advanced northwards, and met the hostile forces drawn up around the petty town of Argaum, still greatly superior in numbers. The British General was now at the head of 18,000 men; he made his arrangements for an immediate attack; the result of the battle was never doubtful, though three native battalions were struck with panic, and were only rallied by Wellesley himself. The enemy was routed with hardly any loss to the victors; Wellesley laid siege to the fortress of Gawilghur, a point of vantage not far from Argaum; the place was stormed after a feeble resistance. Meanwhile, Lord Lake had struck decisive blows against the confederacy of the Mahrattas in the north-west. Scindiah was supreme in the League: he had made Holkar and the Rajah of Berar his mere dependents;

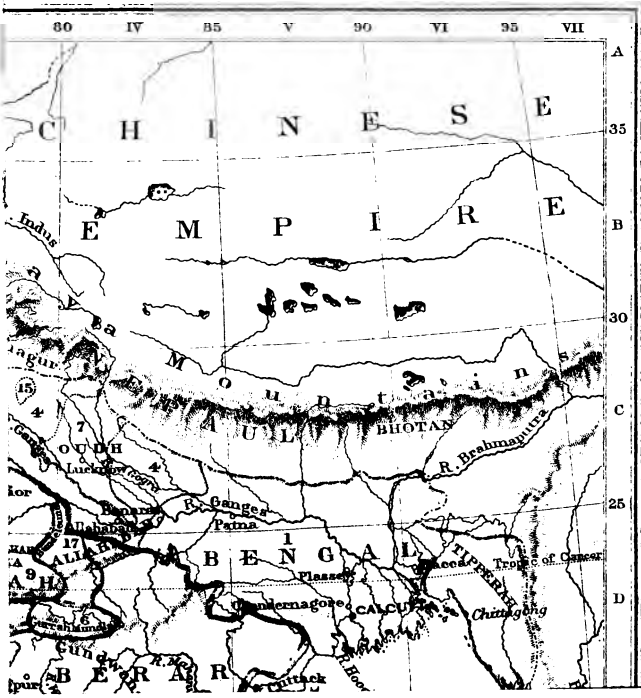
[1] *Supplementary Despatches*, iv., 466.

he was still a formidable and determined foe. He had a powerful army upon the Jumna, commanded by Perron, a French officer; he had made Shah Alum, the Emperor in name, a vassal, and held him captive in the old seat of his State, Delhi; he had stretched hands to the chiefs of the races in the lands of the Punjaub. Lake, however, breaking up from Cawnpore, had soon mastered the fortress of Allighur; Delhi was stormed after a brilliant attack; the Mogul puppet was restored to his throne; the important city of Agra fell. Perron had, meanwhile, treated, and abandoned his troops; his subordinates followed his example, and gave themselves up: the French alliance had proved worse than a broken reed. The remains of Scindiah's army were brought to bay by Lake, near the little town of Laswarree; the enemy made a gallant stand, but the victory of the British chief was complete. During these operations, though Scindiah's ally, Holkar had done little or nothing in the field: he had acted after the fashion of Indian Princes seldom really united against the common foe; but after the defeat of Monson he took up arms in great force and even laid siege to the sacred city of Delhi. Before this time Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar had treated; the negotiations were entrusted to the victor of Assaye; he obtained for the Company immense concessions. Holkar was soon afterwards beaten off from Delhi, and completely defeated near the fortress of Dieg. The power of the Mahrattas was now shattered, and though Lake failed against the stronghold of Bhurtpore, the confeder-

acy which had been so threatening was broken up for the time; Hindustan was at peace, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin; the ascendency of the British arms had been once more established, the borders of the Empire had been enlarged and strengthened.

The spirit of the trader, however, shortsighted and mean, had again made its influence felt in the Company; the "forward" policy of Lord Wellesley was condemned,—even the operations against the Mahrattas, which may have saved India; in Parliament itself he was ill supported; Pitt allowed the aged Cornwallis to be placed in his stead. But his resignation was deplored at Calcutta; addresses of homage and regret poured in; history has named him as one of the greatest of our Proconsuls in Hindustan. He filled great offices, in after life, in the State; but he thought his administration of our Empire in the East his best title to renown; "*Super et Garamantas et Indos Protulit Imperium*" he designed as his epitaph. Arthur Wellesley, after the defeat of Holkar, had been replaced in the government of Mysore, but he conceived that he had not been well treated at home, though Parliament had voted him its thanks with one voice, and George III. had singled him out for a special mark of favour. His letters at this time breathe a captious spirit; in truth he was a very ambitious man, and his temper was irritable, even if, as a rule, kept under control; what we call amiability was not a part of his character. But the people of Mysore understood his worth; an address from the natives of Seringapatam, in which

they "implored the God of all castes and of all nations to hear their constant prayer; and whatever greater affairs than the government of them might call him, to bestow on him health, happiness, and glory" is not the least in the splendid roll of his honours. During the seven years of his career in India, he had proved himself to be a real general and had given promise of great achievements in the field; but his civil administration had been even more deserving of praise. With his brother he had raised the Company to a moral height, which happily was ever afterwards maintained; he had put an end to corruption within the limits of his rule; he had done justice to the Asiatic as well as to the European; he had set a magnificent example of integrity, probity, and public virtue. We may have some idea of what the effects of these qualities were, could we imagine one of Napoleon's rapacious lieutenants put in his place; had Massena or Soult been governor of Mysore, the population would have been driven to rise in arms; the Mahrattas would have found powerful allies; our Empire would have been in no doubtful peril. Like Lord Wellesley, Wellington used to look back with pride on India; after the reverse of Chillianwallah, when in extreme old age, he contemplated leading an army in India again, in order to restore authority which he feared was shaken.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OUDH
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Patna
Benares
Allahabad
BENGAL
Plassey
Tropic of Cancer
Chittagong
Chandernagore
CALCUTTA
BEHAR
Cuttack

CHAPTER III

IRELAND—COPENHAGEN—VIMIERO

Wellesley at St. Helena—He is consulted by Pitt—His interview with Nelson—He enters the House of Commons, and is made Chief Secretary for Ireland, under the Duke of Richmond—State of Ireland in 1807–1808—Wellesley's marriage—His policy and conduct when Chief Secretary—He commands a division at the siege of Copenhagen—Napoleon's designs against the Iberian Peninsula—March of Junot on Lisbon—Napoleon extorts the crown of Spain from the Spanish Bourbons—Great national rising of Spain—Reverses of the French—Baylen—The British Government interferes—Rising of Portugal—Wellesley lands at Mondego Bay—Burrard—Dalrymple—Wellesley's plan of operations—Rolica—Vimiero—Defeat of Junot—The convention of Cintra—The Court of Inquiry.

GENERAL Wellesley touched at St. Helena on his voyage home from India; he had been in bad health for some months; he dwelt in letters on the salubrious air of the island; this incident possibly may have affected the decision of the Allies, many years afterwards, as to the spot that was selected for Napoleon's exile. On his return to England, he was consulted by Pitt, who had the highest opinion as to the sagacity of his views, on the expediency of despatching a body of British troops to the seaboard of the North, in order to lend a hand to Prussia, already

meditating, in a half-hearted way, falling upon Napoleon in his first great march on Vienna; but Wellesley declared that the project was not feasible[1]; Austerlitz had erelong decided the contest. Nelson at this time was about to take command of the fleet which was to annihilate the navies of France and Spain on the great and terrible day of Trafalgar; his only interview with Wellesley has been well described; one warrior had already made England the mistress of the seas; the other was to restore her military power on the land. Wellesley, even after his feats of arms in India, at first obtained only a brigade at home; he not unreasonably chafed at this appointment; but he was soon afterwards made full colonel of the 33rd, the regiment in which he had made his earliest mark in the field. He entered the House of Commons of the United Parliament for the Borough of Rye; the Ministry of "All the Talents" were now in office; he took his seat, in the main, for the purpose of defending Lord Wellesley from the attacks of an obscure Scotsman, who was threatening to repeat against the great Proconsul charges like those made in the case of Hastings. These accusations, however, came to nothing; on the fall of the Ministry of Fox and Grenville, due to the obstinacy of George III., as regards the Catholic claims, and when a Tory Government came again

[1] Pitt's estimate of Wellesley deserves to be quoted: "I never met a military officer with whom it is so satisfactory to converse. He states every difficulty before he undertakes any service, but never after he has undertaken it."—Sir H. Maxwell, *Life of Wellington*, i., 2.

into power, Wellesley was made Chief Secretary for Ireland, under the Duke of Richmond, a Viceroy whose only distinction was the splendid hospitality which still lives among the traditions of the Irish capital. Wellesley accepted this place on the express condition that it was not to interfere with his military career; he was erelong to be called into a nobler sphere of action. Some months before this time he had married Catherine Pakenham, the well-known "Kitty" of Maria Edgeworth, a lady to whom he had been engaged many years before, when he was a youthful aide-de-camp of Lord Westmoreland; their troth was honourably kept by both but the marriage can hardly be pronounced fortunate. The future Duchess was an amiable and affectionate wife, but not a woman of mental gifts; she was not a fit mate for one of the greatest men of his age, whose nature, besides, was unsympathetic and stern.

Ireland was in a deplorable state, and extremely ill-governed, when Wellesley was virtually made the head of the Castle. The Rebellion of 1798 had been suppressed, but fires were alive under the smouldering ashes; the rising of Emmet was a dangerous symptom; the leaders of the United Irishmen had been received by Napoleon, with the welcome he gave to men whom he wished to make his tools; an Irish Legion, akin to the Old Brigade, had been formed; it had been encamped along the coasts of Brittany to co-operate with the Grand Army in the projected descent on England. In the war now being waged between England and France, the immense majority of Irishmen might be reckoned as

our foes; a hostile landing in Leinster, in Munster, in Connaught, would have united against us five-sixths of the people. The Union, too, by destroying the Irish Parliament, had provoked widespread constitutional discontent; the pledges which had practically been given by Pitt, to effect a settlement of the Catholic cause, had been broken, partly owing to the Minister himself, partly to the purblind bigotry of a half-mad King; the Irish Catholics were disaffected to a man, if we except a small minority of the principal landed gentry. The institutions of the country, besides, had remained based on the bad assumption that a mere oligarchy of race and faith was to be supreme; the Protestant establishment, an appanage of the men in office, and a symbol of confiscation and conquest, was a preserve for less than a fifth part of the nation; the Catholic Church, representing the mass of Irishmen, was kept down in degraded subjection. Protestant ascendency monopolised all high places in the State; the Irish Catholics were still largely excluded from its pale. The condition of Ireland, at this time, was so critical that even Grattan, the noble champion of her rights, had assented to measures of severe repression; in fact, the population could be only held down by the sword. Simultaneously Irish public opinion had been distorted and envenomed by the extinction of the Irish Parliament, an organ of national sentiment in a certain sense; and the representation of the whole country had been made distinctly worse. The Liberal party, which in College Green had powerfully supported the Catholic claims, and other wise and

enlightened reforms, had still eminent names at Westminster, but it was swamped by a majority of the United Parliament; it was now well-nigh reduced to impotence. And bad as the representation of the country was in the Irish Parliament, it had markedly deteriorated in the greater Assembly. It was still mainly in the hands of the great Irish families; but, even more than ever had been the case before, it had become the instrument of the most odious corruption; Irish seats were either engrossed by the government, or were shamelessly bought and sold in the open market. Worse than anything else, perhaps, the social conditions of the country were in the highest degree vicious, in fact, pregnant with manifold evils. The tithes of the Established Church were wrung from the Catholic tillers of the soil; hundreds of the landed gentry never beheld their estates, or had sublet them to rack-renting tyrants; even the resident landlords were in many instances the harsh superiors of a down-trodden peasantry. The pernicious results of this state of things were seen in illegal associations of many kinds, and in lawless and widespread disorders.

Wellesley was at the Castle a few months only; his conduct in his office was characteristic of the man. He was a subordinate of a Tory Ministry, engaged in an internecine and, as yet, in a not successful contest, and governing Ireland on the old bad principles, without a thought of change or reform; he faithfully carried out the instructions he received, and kept himself strictly within his inferior sphere. He was elected for Tralee, the chief town

of the County of Kerry, through the customary means of corrupt patronage; strange to say, O'Connell, then a rising lawyer, in after years an adversary of the most formidable kind, was already making his mark on the Munster Circuit; but as yet the warrior and the great tribune had not crossed each other. Wellesley devoted his time to the manipulation of Irish seats for the supporters of the Government in the House of Commons; he stooped to bribery and similar arts, as a soldier obeys his officers' commands [1]; he framed measures of repression, as a matter of course; in common with all the Tories of the day, he looked upon Ireland as a conquered and rebellious country, a natural ally of France, to be ruled by sheer force. Yet though he ran in the grooves of a vicious routine, his capacity as Chief Secretary was not wholly obscured. He laid down an excellent plan for the military defence of Ireland, on the assumption of French invaders landing on her shores, and of a general rising of a disaffected people; his observations are even now of value; the dream of a "Pacata Hibernia" is still an illusion [2]

[1] These few lines from a letter of Wellesley illustrate the Parliamentary corruption of Ireland at this time. "Evan Foulkes, Esqr., of Southampton Street, London, to be the member for Tralee . . . Mr. Justice Day, Mr. Handcock and Mr. Pennefather to draw upon Messers. Drummond for £5000 British cash at ten days sight. . . . It will be convenient to us if you can delay to give them these directions."

[2] These remarks of Wellesley on the state of Ireland in 1807 are not wholly inapplicable to the state of Ireland in 1903, notwithstanding all that has taken place in that interval of time: "The people are disaffected to the British Government, they don't feel the benefits of their situation; attempts to render it better do not reach their minds."

He waged a steady war, as Peel did a few years afterwards, against the jobbery for minor places, and the low corruption, which marked the régime of the Castle; it was enough for him to traffic for Irish seats; he did something to cleanse an Augean stable. Above all, in this far superior to Peel, who resisted the Catholic claims on principle, he perceived that Protestant ascendency was a dangerous state of things; he wrote sharply against absentee and unjust landlords, and against the abuses in the Established Church: he saw that something would ultimately have to be done for Catholic Ireland. If his utterances on the subject are not distinct, in this he was consistent with his attitude in 1793, and with his attitude, as Minister, in 1829. Wellesley gave proof, certainly, of ability in his present office; but unquestionably his views on Irish affairs were never marked by the profound wisdom he displayed in the province of European politics; the associations of Protestant ascendency clung to him to the last.

As he had stipulated, when the occasion arose, Wellesley was transferred from the Castle to his more proper sphere, the camp. The Treaty of Tilsit was a hollow compact, but it made Napoleon the lord of nearly half of the continent; Prussia was for the moment utterly crushed; Austria had missed an opportunity, and meekly bowed to the conqueror; Alexander had agreed to follow in the wake of the victor of Friedland; and was animated, besides, by intense dislike of England, whose vacillating policy he deeply resented. In this position of affairs, the two potentates made professions of offering peace to

England; and while Napoleon had resolved to carry out to the utmost his audacious design of "subduing the land by the sea," and of excluding England from all commerce with Europe, by means of what is known as the Continental System, the new allies prepared to combine all the navies they could control in a decisive attack on the Mistress of the Seas. This boasted league, if carried into effect, would give the Emperors a superiority of force on paper, though, probably, it would have only led to a second Trafalgar; and Denmark, a nation of brave seamen — they had shown what they were in 1801—possessed a strong and well-equipped fleet, which could be made available should it pass into the hands of our enemies. Canning, when made aware of the secret articles of Tilsit, determined to keep this armament out of Napoleon's clutches; a formidable expedition was sent from England to demand a surrender of the Danish fleet, to be held as a pledge until peace should have been made; Lord Cathcart was at the head of a land force of 27,000 men; Wellesley and his old comrade, Baird, were in command of two of its divisions. The Crown Prince of Denmark indignantly refused to accept terms which he deemed an affront, and which nothing could justify but a most grave crisis; Copenhagen was invested by land and by sea; the result was never for a moment doubtful. Wellesley fought a successful action at Roskilde, easily defeating levies of armed peasants. There is nothing remarkable in his conduct, except that, with the humanity which was one of his qualities, he wished to save Copenhagen from bombardment, and

NAPOLEON IN HIS STUDY.
(From a steel engraving.)

to compel a capitulation by cutting off its supplies. Cathcart, however, adopted the sterner course; a considerable part of the city was destroyed; the Danes found it impossible to hold out; their fleet was in a few days on its way to England.

Napoleon, meanwhile, had been straining every nerve to shut England out from trade with the Continent, and to strike a mortal blow at his one remaining enemy. British merchandise was seized along an immense seaboard; British subjects were imprisoned on different pretexts; an attempt was made to raise a Chinese Wall against England in five-sixths of Europe. At the same time he made strenuous efforts to increase his naval power; squadrons were sent into the Mediterranean to threaten Sicily to be annexed to Joseph's kingdom of Naples; from Dantzic and Riga to Trieste, all around the Continent, his vassals and allies were directed to make war upon British commerce; his policy was, to some extent, furthered by the anger which the expedition to Copenhagen had aroused in the councils of the lesser maritime Powers. His eyes had soon turned towards the Iberian Peninsula, and had fastened on Portugal in the first instance. That little state, an ancient ally of England, had been tossed to and fro in the tremendous conflict which had raged, with scarcely an interruption, since 1793; but it had inclined at heart to its British protector; it had numberless associations with British traders. It was now ruled by a Regent, in the place of an insane sovereign; Napoleon peremptorily commanded him to close his ports against British ships, and,

without any declaration of war, to seize the persons and the property of British merchants at this time in Portugal. The Regent, a weak and incapable ruler, endeavoured to make a compromise, but to no purpose: Napoleon resolved to invade Portugal, an object he had already had in view. A French Army, about 25,000 strong, was gradually gathered together at Bayonne; it was backed by other forces already menacing Spain; Junot, a dashing soldier, was placed at its head.[1] He had crossed the Bidassoa, in October, 1807; meantime a treaty had been made at Fontainebleau between the French Emperor and the Court of Spain; Portugal was to be dismembered and given in part to Godoy, the favourite of Charles IV. and his adulterous Queen; a Spanish Army was to be employed to support Junot. Whether this compact was in any sense sincere, or was a mere mask to conceal the designs Napoleon entertained against the Spanish Bourbons can only be matter for conjecture; but it secured Junot the aid of a Spanish contingent; he invaded Portugal with perhaps 40,000 men, to a considerable extent very inferior soldiers. He had been ordered to advance by the route of Ciudad Rodrigo; but Napoleon changed his mind, and to ensure celerity bade him press forward along the banks of the Tagus; the invaders plunged into an almost impassable country and lost thousands of men on the march: scarcely 2000 spectres in rags reached Lisbon by the close of November, leaving a wretched

[1] The very valuable *History of the Peninsular War* by Mr. Oman begins at this point.

multitude of stragglers far behind. The Regent ought to have crushed this handful of men; but the terror of Napoleon's arms prevailed: he fled from his capital, and with the Court crossed the Atlantic under the escort of a British fleet; Junot had soon taken possession of Lisbon.

By this time, Napoleon had matured his projects against Spain. That unfortunate land, under an imbecile Government, had been in decline for many years; but Spain had made herself a satellite of France: she had lavished her resources on an exacting ally; she had offered up her Navy, at Trafalgar, without hope, as a sacrifice. But Napoleon had resolved on annexing the kingdom; he was partly moved to his purpose by the obvious reason that a Bourbon dynasty on the throne of Spain was a possible menace to Revolutionary France; partly by a determination to enforce the Continental System; partly by a real wish to regenerate a people shamefully ruled; and to create institutions in Spain of the Imperial type. Personal resentment, too, played a distinct part; Godoy, the evil genius of the Spanish Monarchy, had issued a proclamation before Jena, calling on the Spanish nation to take up arms, and a threat, evidently directed against France. From this time the fate of Spain was resolved on; Talleyrand not improbably seconded his master's policy, though he did not approve of the acts of fraud and violence that were soon to follow. In the autumn of 1807 and the first days of 1808, French troops were poured into Spain on different pretexts; the Spanish frontier fortresses were treacherously seized; in a

short time nearly 100,000 men were encamped beyond the southern verge of the Pyrenees, and occupied the chief approaches to Madrid. The miserable intrigues of the Spanish royal family, an odious exhibition of squalid discord, may perhaps have quickened Napoleon's purpose, but it appears certain that, long before these events, he had marked Spain down as a spoil for his arms. Godoy, supreme in the councils of Charles IV. and the Queen, got wind of the Emperor's evident designs; he urged his dupes to imitate the example of the Portuguese Regent, and to take ship for Spanish America; but a rising at Aranjuez put an end to this scheme; he was maltreated by a furious populace; the King abdicated, and his son Ferdinand was placed in his stead. By this time the North of Spain had been flooded with French troops; Murat, as lieutenant of Napoleon, occupied Madrid; he refused to recognise Ferdinand's title to the throne, obeying the Machiavellian commands of his master. Ferdinand was now skilfully enticed to Bayonne, where Napoleon, holding the threads of an infamous intrigue, had gone in order to effect his object; Charles IV., his consort, and Godoy fell at the conqueror's feet; after dishonourable scenes of recrimination and passion, a renunciation of all right to the crown of Spain was extorted from the whole royal family, Napoleon, like fate, swaying his puppets to his will. The victims of this crime were banished into gilded exile in France; as if in irony Talleyrand was made their keeper.

The conduct of Napoleon at this juncture was

perhaps the worst of his political acts; it was a combination of evil statecraft, and wrong; it was far more censurable than what he had done at Venice. Years afterwards, in the solitude of St. Helena, he acknowledged that it was profoundly immoral, and that the end he proposed to himself, the regeneration of Spain, was not justified by the detestable means. He transferred the throne of Spain, made vacant in this way, to his amiable, but not able elder brother, Joseph, placing Murat on Joseph's throne of Naples; a Junta of nobles, high ecclesiastics, and officials was assembled to confirm the choice of the conqueror. Napoleon, occupying a large part of the Peninsula by his armies, believed that his success had been completely assured; he was convinced that he could exclaim with Louis XIV., that the Pyrenees had been effaced as a barrier. But the great despot, hitherto accustomed only to deal with peoples of a very different type, had not reckoned on the nature of a proud and obstinate race, which had held Rome at bay for more than a century and a half; and which, only three generations before this time, had risen against the Pretender of the House of Hapsburg, and against the heretic English and Dutch, when the position of affairs appeared desperate. The nation sprang to arms as a man; the mountaineers of Asturias lit the flame; it spread into Galicia and Leon; like a conflagration blazing from many a range of hills, it illuminated Andalusia and the Eastern Kingdoms; it was an ubiquitous and universal movement. The regular armies — they were less contemptible than

has been supposed — were swept into the general rising; self-governing Juntas established themselves; and though vengeance was taken, in too many instances, on the partisans of the French usurper, and there was a fierce outbreak of Revolutionary passion, the insurrection was a grand, nay, an heroic spectacle. The results were seen in a very short time; they astounded a Continent that had licked the feet of Napoleon. Bessiéres, holding the great line of communication between Bayonne and Madrid, no doubt won a battle at Medina Rio Seco, and scattered in flight the rude levies of the West. But notwithstanding the great force which the Emperor had perfidiously moved into Spain, the French arms were unsuccessful everywhere else. Moncey was driven back from Valencia in defeat; Lefebvre Desnoettes was foiled before Saragossa, a memorable name. Erelong a terrible disaster took place, which threw a dark shadow on the Imperial glories, and was execrated by Napoleon, through his life, as an indelible military disgrace. Dupont, after invading Andalusia and sacking Cordova with reckless cruelty, was caught on the verge of the Sierra Morena, and compelled to lay down his arms with some 20,000 men. The blow seemed for the moment decisive; Joseph evacuated Madrid in hot haste, and took refuge behind the line of the Ebro.

The great rising of Spain made a profound impression on England; the leading parties and men in the State gave it heartfelt sympathy. It was the first symptom of a real national effort to shake off the yoke which Napoleon had laid on the Conti-

nent; Pitt had predicted before his death that there would be such a movement. The Junta of the Asturias had judiciously sent two emissaries to England to plead their cause; Parliament pronounced for an armed intervention in Spain. This resolve was quickened by an insurrection in Portugal, not so fierce or so general as that of Spain, but formidable enough to menace Junot, and to embarrass him, cut off as he now was from France; the British Ministers determined, in the summer of 1808, to make a descent on the Iberian Peninsula, and to send an armed force to support the insurgents. The British army was now much more powerful and more efficient, as an instrument of war, than it had been in 1793–1794, when it had made its unfortunate essays in the Low Countries. Its organisation, indeed, was still very defective; the bad influence of favouritism still hung on it; it was very different from the mighty force, which in the language of Wellington at a subsequent time, "could go anywhere and do anything." But its numbers had been largely increased by a regular admixture with the militia; it had been improved by the reforms of the Duke of York; Moore, the most brilliant, perhaps, of living British soldiers, had done much to make its tactics better, more flexible, more adapted to modern war: as usually happens in a great and free country, comparatively young men had made their mark in it; its discipline, if severe, was excellent; it reckoned Alexandria and Maida among recent victories, in which it had fairly beaten the renowned legions of France. The Ministry, at this

juncture, possessed the means of sending a considerable expedition to the Peninsula, unlike the petty expeditions despatched in former years, from our shores. Trafalgar had made invasion hopeless; Wellesley was in command of 9000 men, intended to attack the Spanish-American Colonies; propitious fortune favoured him once more; he was directed to sail with this force from Cork to Portugal. He was to be joined by General Spencer with 5000 troops from Gibraltar and Cadiz; Generals Anstruther and Acland were to embark from England with about 4000 men, Moore was to be despatched from the Baltic with 10,000 men. An army, therefore, nearly 30,000 strong, was to be assembled and to land on the Portuguese seaboard; this was a bold enterprise, of which the credit was due to Castlereagh.

Wellesley had been made a lieutenant-general by this time; but he was the junior officer of that rank in the British army: remarkable as his career in India had been, he was to be placed under the command of Burrard and Dalrymple, veterans of the past, who were to mar the operations that ensued. For the moment, however, he was given a free hand to direct his own forces and those of Spencer; it was characteristic of him that, on his voyage from Cork, he endeavoured to make himself acquainted with the Spanish tongue. Having preceded the expedition in a light vessel, he had interviews with the Galician Junta, and with the leaders of the rising in Portugal; but he was not favourably impressed by their boastful reports; he resolved to confine his

movements to the interior and the seacoast of Portugal. He was now at the head of rather more than 13,000 men, Spencer having come into line with him. The landing was effected at Mondego Bay, a considerable distance to the north of Lisbon; it was completed in the first days of August; this was the beginning of the great Peninsular War, with respect, at least, to the arms of England. Wellesley lost some days from a deplorable want of means of transport, a delay that told greatly in the enemy's favour, who otherwise might have been taken by surprise: he was in full march by the 14th of August; the plan of his operations had been arranged. His object was to attack and defeat Junot, known to be in Lisbon with a large part of the French army. Wellesley's project, though questionable in pure strategy, was, nevertheless, essentially well conceived. He resolved to move, with his own force, along the coast-line, protected on his right flank by the British fleet; but he knew that Moore with his 10,000 men was at hand; he proposed that Moore should march inland on Santarem, and that the united army should converge on Lisbon, bringing Junot to bay, and driving him away from that capital. This advance on a double line was opposed to the ordinary rules of the art, but it has long ago been justified by the best critics of war; it may be compared to Napoleon's movement against Wurmser on both shores of the Lake of Garda,[1]

[1] For Wellesley's plan of operations, see *Gurwood's Selection*, p. 231, an excellent work. Napier's *History of the Peninsular War*, i., 106, Routledge Edition, completely justifies Wellesley.

after Castiglione, and the raising of the siege of Mantua. It deserves special notice that Wellesley, one of the greatest masters of tactics, was convinced, even at this time, that the French mode of attack in the field would probably fail against the *robur peditum* of the British army: the Column, he felt assured, was no match for the Line, as the Carthaginian Phalanx was no match for the Roman Legion.[1]

By this time Junot had, since the preceding winter, established himself in his late conquest — Lisbon. He kept the capital down by threats and by force; his administration of it was marked by the fraudulent rapine and by the severities which, as a rule, disgraced the French generals in Portugal and Spain, and were not the least causes of the Emperor's failure.[2] He had reorganised and strengthened his exhausted army, and though it was still to some extent an assemblage of conscripts, it had several regiments of good soldiers; the cavalry and artillery were efficient arms; it had soon reached the number of 30,000 Frenchmen. For months Junot felt him-

[1] Wellesley's remarks to Croker are well known. See Sir H. Maxwell's *Life of Wellington*, i., 97–98: "My die is cast; the French may overwhelm me, but I don't think they will outmanœuvre me. First, because I am not afraid of them, as everybody else seems to be; and secondly, because, if what I hear of their system of manœuvres is true, I think it a false one, as against steady troops. I suspect all the Continental Armies were more than half beaten before the battle was begun. I, at least, will not be frightened beforehand."

[2] The conduct of Junot and of the French at Lisbon is well described by Thiébault, who was Junot's Chief of the Staff. *Mémoires*, iv., 139, 199.

self completely secure, and spent his time in idle pleasures in Lisbon; but he was roused from this dalliance by the insurrection of Spain; this suddenly made his situation one of real danger. He lost part of his Spanish contingent, and was compelled to disarm and imprison the remaining part; the population of Lisbon became menacing, and seemed eager to take up arms; Portugal had soon risen in insurrection, like Spain; he was cut off from communication with France; he obtained no assistance from a Russian fleet in the Tagus, the commander of which was secretly hostile; he received intelligence that a British force might make a descent. His position, no doubt, had become critical, and he gave proof of a rather fitful energy; but his measures were not those of a real general. He did not form an entrenched camp to defend Lisbon, as Wellesley did on a greater occasion; he left too many of his troops in the capital,—dangerous negligence in the existing state of affairs. Above all, he made no strenuous efforts to concentrate his army against enemies known to be at hand: he kept garrisons in fortresses to no purpose; he allowed a detachment to remain on the eastern bank of the Tagus, where it could hardly be of any conceivable use.[1] In a word, he did not assemble his forces toward the decisive scene of action, which he must have known would be where the British army would appear; a third part at least of these were turned to no account and wasted. He heard, however, almost at once of the landing of Wellesley,

[1] For the faulty dispositions of Junot see the admirable observations of Napoleon. Thiébault, *Mémoires*, iv., 261, 271.

and he prepared with his present means to confront his enemy; the delay that followed the landing was a godsend to him. He sent forward Laborde, a skilful officer, with some 6000 men, to hold the British chief in check; he directed a lieutenant, Loison, who had been on the other bank of the Tagus, to march by Santarem and to join Laborde; he made ready with the main army to march out of Lisbon, and to offer battle to Wellesley near Torres Vedras. He left, however, a large detachment behind — clinging to his error at the critical moment.

Wellesley, meanwhile, had been marching along the coast-line, by Leira and Alcobaca, to attack Junot. Laborde had advanced to meet the British General; but rightly fell back to a defensive position in the midst of a plain enclosed by hills, through which the road from Obidos to Torres Vedras and Lisbon passes. The French General first took his stand on an eminence near Rolica, a petty village. He was assailed with greatly superior forces on the 17th of August, Wellesley endeavouring to surround him on both flanks; but he effected his escape with admirable skill, and took another position a short way off, in the rear, on a range of wooded heights, by the hamlet of Columbeira. The attack was repeated in the same manner; but the outflanking movement was made late; the British suffered a good deal in a frontal attack; but the second position was at last carried; the French lost three guns, and perhaps 500 men in the combat. Laborde, however, whose manœuvres had deserved the highest praise, retreated, scarcely molested, to join his chief;

the loss of Wellesley was about the same as that of his enemy; more than one of his subordinates might have done better; in fact they were not equal to their adversaries in an encounter of this kind. Loison, meantime, after a very fatiguing march, had reached Torres Vedras from Santarem; Laborde had fallen back some miles to the southward. Junot had marched out of Lisbon on the 15th of August; by the 19th his two lieutenants had joined him; Junot, on the next day, resolved to attack Wellesley, now at Vimiero, at a short distance. The French General was at the head of nearly 14,000 men; he had nearly 2000 good cavalry; his artillery numbered twenty-three guns.

Anstruther and Acland had disembarked by the 20th of August; they brought Wellesley a reinforcement of some 4000 men. The veteran Burrard was in their wake, but fortunately he did not assume the command; Wellesley, now at Vimiero for two or three days, was allowed to make his arrangements for the battle at hand. The position he chose was one of formidable strength; but, in the case of a reverse, by no means free from danger. His right and right centre, where he placed his main force, rested on a line of steep and broken heights, exceedingly difficult to be stormed by an enemy; but should such an effort prove successful, the defeated Army would be close to the sea, and would find it no easy task to retreat. Before the British centre rose an isolated hill, affording excellent means of defence; Wellesley occupied this with some 3000 men; it was favourable for the play of artillery; it was, perhaps, the key of

the position of the British centre. The left of Wellesley held his weakest ground; this was a low range of hills, sinking down by degrees, and capable of being turned at its verge; but it was covered by a kind of ravine on its front, which ran like a huge fosse before this part of the line. The whole of Wellesley's front spread along a short space, so that his troops could be quickly moved from one point to another; this was fortunate in the events which followed. He was now in command of not far from 17,000 British troops; to these should be added some 2000 Portuguese, rude and ill-armed levies of very little value. He was, besides, exceedingly weak in cavalry, having only about 260 British sabres; he had not more than eighteen guns.

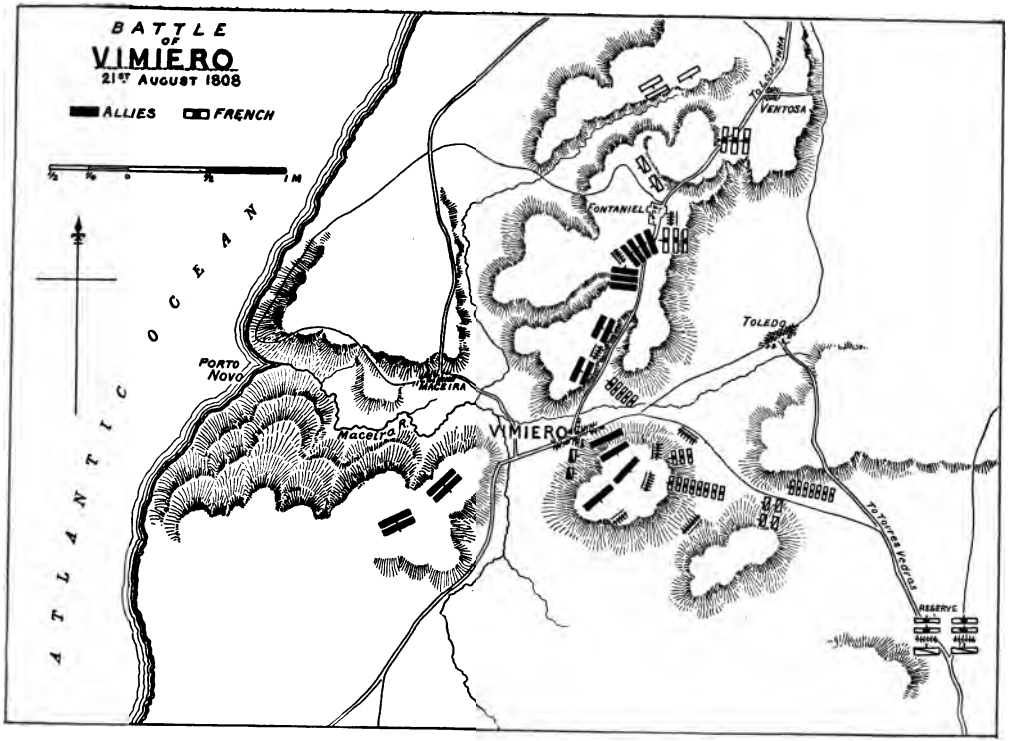
Clouds of dust rising along the road from Torres Vedras disclosed the approach of the French Army in the early forenoon of the 21st of August. Junot was recklessly impatient to begin the attack; he may have learned that British reinforcements were at hand; but his dispositions gave proof of precipitate haste. He hardly reconnoitred the ground at all[1]; he left detachments behind which might have joined him; his soldiers were fatigued by a march under a burning sun; he did not give them even an hour to rest. He was not, however, without *coup d'œil* on the field; the plan of his attack was not badly conceived, though in executing it unpardonable mistakes were made. He, probably, wisely avoided Welles-

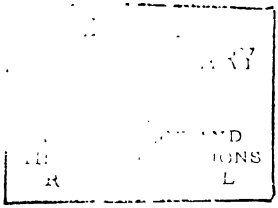
[1] Napoleon fastened on this palpable error of his lieutenant. Thiébault, *Mémoires*, iv., 265. "Rien ne peut justifier l'attaque d'une position qui n'a pas été reconnue."

ley's right, for this part of the position was of great strength; he properly decided on turning his adversary's left, while he would fall on the British centre in front with the mass of his army. But the outflanking movement was made with much too small a force, and the distance to be traversed by the French was great and difficult; Wellesley was given time to detach from his right to support his left, and thus to be superior to his enemy on this part of the field. Meanwhile Junot had marched against the hill in advance of the British centre; the French soldiery came on in their wonted dashing style, but they were mown down by the destructive fire of the enemy's infantry, and charged by the overlapping line as the shaken columns fell back; the attack was boldly repeated three times; but it had never a chance of a successful issue. Wellesley made a counterstroke with his handful of cavalry; but as too commonly has happened with British troopers, they rushed forward too far, and got out of control; they were charged by a superior body of Junot's horsemen, which covered the retreat of the already broken infantry. Meantime the battle had gone decisively against the French on Wellesley's left, which had only been weakly menaced. While the British centre was being assailed, Junot, seeing that the outflanking movement had not sufficient support, detached a brigade of his army to second this attack; but this body of men was almost destroyed by the superior forces which Wellesley had sent off to the aid of his left. Brennier, the leader of the outflanking movement, having been retarded

by the ravine he unexpectedly met, and having been compelled to make a long circuitous march, made a gallant attempt to retrieve the fortunes of the day; but he, too, was completely beaten, in turn, and driven back in precipitate flight. The whole of Junot's army was now falling back in confusion; its retreat was covered by its still nearly intact cavalry; but it had lost half its guns, and fully 2300 men; it would have been scattered in rout by a bold, decisive stroke.

Assuredly Wellesley would have dealt this blow; he had lost little more than 700 men; his troops were in the full flush of victory; he could easily have cut Junot off from Lisbon, and driven him, in ruin, across the hills on Santarem, where, probably, he would have been forced to lay down his arms. But the purpose of the British commander was crossed by Burrard, who reached the scene when the battle was won; the timid veteran forbade any attempt at a pursuit; he announced that he would make a halt until he had been joined by the 10,000 men of Moore, who, in opposition to Wellesley's plan, had been ordered not to march on Santarem, but to come into line with the main army by sea. The vexation of Wellesley may be conceived; the fruits of victory had been wrested from his grasp; Junot and his beaten forces had been allowed to escape; they reached Torres Vedras unmolested, and were free to return to Lisbon. Dalrymple superseded Burrard on the 22nd of August; the change of commanders, seldom a judicious course, made what was already bad enough, worse; Dalrymple


BATTLE OF VIMIERO
21ST AUGUST 1808
ALLIES
FRENCH
1 M
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PORTO NOVO
MACEIRA
Maceira R.
VIMIERO
FONTANIEL
VENTOSA
TOLEDO
To Torres Vedras
RESERVE



decided on prolonging the halt; he would not even menace the enemy until Moore had effected his junction with him; this involved a delay of eight or nine days, during which Junot might, perhaps, have made a successful stand at Lisbon. But the French commander, after Vimiero, had lost heart: he had been defeated in a battle that could have been made decisive; he was isolated in a hostile country; he could not expect to hold Lisbon for any time, or to make his way through Spain, insurgent as it was, from the Tagus to the Pyrenean frontier. He sent Kellerman, the brilliant chief of Marengo, to offer terms, which Dalrymple was glad to accept: the French army was to quit Lisbon, and to evacuate Portugal; it was to be conducted to France in British transports. Wellesley chafed against these proposals, but could not resist them; the Convention of Cintra, as it was called, was signed; Junot and his army were before long at sea; they were at length safely landed on the shores of their country. The Convention of Cintra was not, perhaps, the pusillanimous act it has generally been supposed, but it aroused a storm of indignation in England, where timidity in the field has always been fiercely condemned; Byron has indicated, in bitter verses, the tone of the opinion of the day. A Court of Enquiry was soon held; the report was cautious, undecided, and to little purpose; but enough transpired to free Wellesley from blame, and to mark him out for future distinction. Burrard and Dalrymple were never placed in command again.

The Campaign of Vimiero is of real interest; it was the first instance in which Wellesley commanded

a British against a French army. His dispositions, if not very remarkable, were excellent, and not unworthy of the victor of Assaye. He was never supreme in the grand sphere of strategy, but his project of an advance in double lines to close round Junot, as if in a vice, if it has been censured, was worthy of high praise. His right at Vimiero was in danger, in a certain sense; but the enemy did not dare to attack it; he showed his characteristic resource in arraying his army in the field; the movement by which he detached from his right to strengthen his left was perfectly conceived. He conducted the battle with judgment and insight: had he not been superseded by Burrard at the decisive moment, the French army must have been completely routed. The arrangements of his adversary were, from first to last, ill-considered, and not those of a true commander. Junot might have assembled at least 20,000 men to give battle to Wellesley, had he understood war; he left too great a force behind him in Lisbon; he never entrenched himself in a position outside the city. At Vimiero he was culpably rash; he attacked his enemy without examining the ground; if he was correct in his idea that he ought to turn Wellesley's left, the execution of this movement was a series of mistakes. He was fortunate in escaping the fate of Dupont: had Wellesley been free to act, Junot would, all but certainly, have succumbed. As for the armies that encountered each other in this short passage of war, they gave proof of the qualities by which they were long distinguished. The French were as yet superior in skill

in manœuvring; their three arms worked together better than those of their enemy; they were more agile and ready in the field. But they had nothing to equal the British infantry, when on the defensive; their masses were unable to contend against the British line, with its enveloping fire, and with its determined and steady onset. On the other hand, the British army was still slow when on the march: it was as yet very badly supplied with different appliances required in the field; its impedimenta were heavy and cumbrous; its cavalry and artillery were much too weak, as was to be expected in the case of a force, transported to a great distance from the British Isles.

CHAPTER IV

THE DOURO—TALAVERA

Napoleon's authority on the Continent weakened after Baylen and Vimiero—He persists in his purpose to conquer Spain and Portugal—His interview with the Czar at Erfurt—England rejects their overtures and continues the war—Moore at Lisbon—He marches to the assistance of the Spanish armies—Napoleon invades Spain—Espinosa, Tudela—Moore's march to Sahagun—Napoleon crosses the Guadarrama, but fails to destroy Moore's army—The retreat to, and the battle of, Corunna—Death of Moore—Faulty dispositions of the French armies after the departure of Napoleon—Soult at Oporto—Victor on the Guadiana—Wellesley in command of a British and Portuguese army at Lisbon—His masterly views on the Peninsular War—He advances against Soult and crosses the Douro—His great ability in this achievement—Able retreat of Soult—Wellesley, after some delay, advances with Cuesta, up the valley of the Tagus—Danger of this strategy—Battle of Talavera—Retreat of Wellesley after a narrow escape—He receives the title of Wellington.

NAPOLEON had marked down Spain and Portugal as an easy prey, but Baylen and Vimiero, followed by the flight of the forces of the invaders behind the Ebro, — a pusillanimous military mistake, for which King Joseph was mainly to blame, — had not only subverted his power through-

out the Peninsula, but had weakened his authority on the subject Continent. A thrill of amazement and hope ran through Europe at the intelligence that rude Spanish levies, and a small British army, thrown on the coasts of Portugal, had defeated the legions which had been the terror of the world, and had completely baffled the evil policy of the conqueror at Bayonne. Austria, humiliated and dismembered since the rout of Austerlitz, and ever willing to wound, even if afraid to strike, began to increase her military power; the Archduke Charles was placed at the head of her War Office; her regular army was largely augmented, and made more national. Prussia, trodden under foot since Jena and Friedland, indignantly chafed in her degrading chains, and was deeply affected by what had occurred in Spain; Germany, hitherto divided into feeble and almost hostile states, stirred, in the presence of her French oppressors, with a movement which, in the fulness of time, was to become a mighty patriotic rising, spreading from the Rhine and the Vistula to the Danube. In Russia the nobles and the merchants, — two powerful orders of men, — seriously injured in their direct and vital interests, had always disliked the policy of Tilsit; even Alexander had ceased to be overawed and won by the fascination of Napoleon's personality and wiles. At the same time the Emperor had engaged in a quarrel with the Pope, and had marched an army into the Papal States; his expeditions in the Mediterranean had failed; the Continental System, if doing England much harm, had not produced decisive results; even

in France there were symptoms of popular alarm and discontent. The gigantic but unnatural fabric of despotic force, which had been suddenly raised by the genius of a single man, seconded by an extraordinary succession of events, was, in a word, shaken by recent mischances; signs were not wanting that it would not be a permanent structure. In these circumstances, Napoleon resolved to avenge the disasters that had befallen his arms beyond the Pyrenees, and to subjugate the whole Iberian Peninsula; but he sought in the first instance to secure the loyal support of his newly made ally, the great monarch beyond the Niemen, of whose sincerity he had already misgivings.

An interview, accordingly, between the two potentates was arranged in Germany, at the town of Erfurt, not far from the historic battlefield of Jena. Princes and nobles from the Confederation of the Rhine and several ambassadors of foreign Powers graced the meeting of the Czar and Napoleon; Goethe and Wieland, forgetting patriotic feelings, and the independence which is the glory of letters, bowed in admiration to the mighty conqueror; the scene prefigured, in some measure, the greater scene which Dresden beheld four years afterwards. The ascendency of Napoleon again triumphed; Alexander yielded to an overmastering spell; he recognised Joseph as King of Spain; he gave his ally a free hand in the Iberian Peninsula, and once more promised to maintain the Continental System. He obtained, however, advantages for himself; the prize of Constantinople was dangled before his eyes,

though Napoleon had resolved that it should never fall into his hands; he was permitted to do what he pleased in Finland, and to subdue the lands on the Danube which marched with his Empire. The interview, however, was most important for this,—the allied sovereigns for the second time made overtures to England, offering peace, though it is tolerably certain that, on Napoleon's part at least, this was either an attempt to mask his ulterior designs, or to win the opinion of the Continent again to his side. The two Emperors parted with effusive professions of friendship; they were soon to become deadly enemies; but Napoleon had gained what he wanted, a pledge for the moment that the Czar would not interfere with the conquest of Portugal and Spain. The British Government, as Napoleon no doubt expected, refused to treat unless the Juntas of Spain should be recognised as the *de facto* ruling powers; this implied that Joseph was a mere usurper; nothing remained but to continue the war. At this juncture the events of the last few months had, perhaps, unduly elated the British Ministry, and had increased the enthusiasm of the nation in behalf of Spain; the Convention of Cintra was quickly forgotten; Junot had been defeated and forced to abandon Portugal; the invaders had been driven nearly to the verge of the Pyrenees; every ship brought news of fresh Spanish triumphs, and of the irresistible might of the great Spanish rising.

It was determined to invade Spain with a British force, to be supported by the Spanish levies; the army which had won Vimiero and for some time had

remained under the command of Dalrymple, was to be raised to the strength of 30,000 men at least, and to be placed in the hands of Moore, who, we have seen, had been balked in the recent campaign. Moore, I have said, was a distinguished soldier; he had done much to improve the British infantry and to make its tactics and formations more efficient. He probably had not the profound designs of Wellesley, as to the true method to cope with Napoleon in the Peninsula, but, be this as it may, his orders were to co-operate in the field with the Spanish armies.

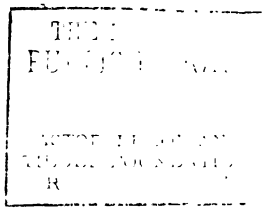
Moore had reached Lisbon in the first days of October, 1808; he made his preparations for the intended movement. But Dalrymple, as was his wont, was timid and dull-minded; he had kept his army around Lisbon, and had done nothing to further a march eastward; above all, he had not explored the roads leading from Portugal into Spain. Moore, nevertheless, gave proof of praiseworthy diligence, though the organisation of his army was still defective; in fact, it was greatly wanting in means of transport, and in supplies. But he was on his way from Lisbon in the third week of October: he was to be joined by Baird with a fine division of some 12,000 men, to be disembarked at Corunna, and to come into line with him; the collective array was about 24,000 strong. Moore's object was to advance on Burgos, and to lend an effective hand to the Spanish armies, still described by popular report as victorious. His movement, however, was very slow, partly because his impedimenta were cumbrous and bad; partly because he followed the least available route

from Portugal; and he detached the greater part of his artillery, and his whole cavalry, by a circuitous road, far outside the true line of march, because he had received information that these arms could not advance with the main army,—unquestionably a grave military mistake. He was at Salamanca by the last week of November, at the head of about 15,000 men; Baird, who had marched from Corunna, was at no great distance, but Hope, with the horsemen and guns, was near the Escurial, that is, separated from headquarters by nearly a hundred miles of a mountainous and very difficult country. The British General could not stir for ten or twelve days, until he had drawn his forces together, especially two of his necessary arms; meantime ominous intelligence reached him from every side. The Spanish armies were unable to make any real impression, even on the forces of Joseph behind the Ebro; they were checked and defeated more than once; and Moore, like most soldiers, underrated the power of the Spanish rising, as a means of resisting an organised enemy. Erelong an overwhelming tempest of war had burst through the Pyrenean barrier, and was sweeping away all obstacles in its destructive course. Napoleon had collected a great army, composed of his best and veteran troops, and fully 120,000 strong; he had moved it rapidly through Germany and France; he had crossed the frontier of Spain in the first days of November. He had hoped to surround and annihilate the Spanish armies; he was foiled in this purpose by the movements of Joseph; but one Spanish army was routed at Espinosa, another met

the same fate at Tudela; the conqueror, having forced the Somo Sierra Pass, was erelong marching in triumph on Madrid.

The position of Moore had become critical; he could expect little or no assistance from the defeated Spaniards; Napoleon might turn against him in irresistible force. For a short time he contemplated a retreat on Portugal; but he was reluctant to take so untoward a step; happily for his fame as a warrior, he changed his purpose. He received information that Madrid would make a stand, like that of Saragossa; he resolved to make a real effort to assist the capital, and to fall on the line of the French communications with Bayonne, a bold and a perilous, but a well-conceived design. His army, still separated from Baird, but joined by Hope, broke up from Salamanca on the 11th of December; Moore's object, for the moment, was to reach Valladolid, and so to draw the enemy away from Madrid. But an intercepted letter from Berthier induced the British commander to advance northwards; Soult was isolated on the Carrion with an insignificant force; Madrid had fallen after a mere show of resistance; Napoleon was about to march to the south, and to complete the subjugation of Portugal and Spain. Moore resolved to attack and defeat Soult, gracing his arms with at least a passing triumph: he concentrated his whole army, perhaps 26,000 strong, and, assisted by a division of Spanish levies, pushed onward to Sahagun not far from the French Marshal's camp. But in the meantime Napoleon had changed his plans; hearing of the audacious movement of

SIR JOHN HOPE, EARL OF HOPETOUN
(From the painting by Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A.)



Moore, he determined on crushing an enemy he deemed in his grasp: he rapidly assembled a great army, and having crossed the Guadarrama after an extraordinary march, was in full pursuit of Moore by the last days of December. That General, however, instantly decamped, and hastened to effect his retreat through Leon; Napoleon, after many efforts, could not bring him to bay; at Astorga the Emperor gave up the attempt, perhaps because he had learned that Austria was threatening to draw the sword; he committed the task of following Moore to Soult. It is unnecessary to dwell on the tale of the subsequent retreat; the British soldiery gave proof of their wonted valour in more than one sharp and bloody fight; but they also showed their tendency to become demoralised under the stress of severe hardship and want; there were miserable scenes of excess, and of a fatal lack of discipline. Moore, nevertheless, made good his way to Corunna, and completely beat off Soult in a well-contested battle: he fell gloriously in the very arms of victory. But he had accomplished a really great achievement; his march to Sahagun had drawn away Napoleon from his plans of conquest, which most probably might have been realised; it had a marked effect on the issues of the Peninsular War.

Important, however, as the operations of Moore had been, the Emperor, it is likely, might have attained his object at last, had he been able to remain in Spain, and to have conducted the war in person. He had more than 200,000 soldiers beyond the Pyrenees, half of these being excellent troops; the

Spanish armies had been utterly beaten though the national insurrection was still full of life; the British army, after Corunna, had returned to England. It is difficult to suppose that the greatest of warriors, employing forces for the time irresistible in the field, possessing the unity of supreme command, and the absolute master of submissive lieutenants, would not have planted his eagles at Lisbon and Cadiz, and have held the whole Peninsula in his grasp, had he been on the spot to watch the march of events, and to give his armies the impulse and the direction he alone could give. And undoubtedly, after the fall of Madrid, when Joseph was restored to his usurping throne, large classes in Spain thought the contest hopeless; even lassitude of a kind was to be perceived in some parts of the kingdom. But at this juncture, as was often to be seen again, the war, as a whole, was not well conducted, regard being had to existing facts, though its general operations were controlled by Napoleon, who, however, was hundreds of miles away from its theatres. It is not easy to understand why immense forces were employed in overrunning the Eastern kingdoms, by no means the decisive scene of events, and were not moved westwards against Portugal, though all honour is due to Saragossa and its heroic defence, and the patriotic levies in this region were not contemptible foes. But the French armies were disseminated over too vast an area, considering the still formidable power of an ubiquitous rising, though Napoleon believed that they were strong enough to effect his purpose, to subjugate Portugal in the first instance, and to be-

come masters of Andalusia. Soult, after Corunna, was ordered to invade Portugal from the north, while Victor was to advance from Estremadura into Alemtejo; Lapisse, with a division of considerable strength, was to maintain a communication between the two commanders. But Soult was harassed on his march by a partisan warfare, and by obstacles of many kinds; he was, besides, not well supported by his colleague, Ney,—an early example of the divisions which in the Peninsula were so disastrous to France; he did not take Oporto until the close of March, 1809, with an army greatly reduced in numbers. Victor won a bloody battle at Medellin on the Guadiana; but he, too, suffered much in his movements; and Lapisse, instead of obeying his orders, joined Victor and lost all contact with Soult, The two French generals were now much too weak to attempt to overrun and conquer Portugal.

The campaign of Moore, though a seeming failure, ended in a brilliant victory for the British arms, and rather stimulated English opinion to go on with the war. An idea was indeed abroad that the power of Napoleon, notwithstanding his recent success in Spain, was already declining, nay, might soon fall: great hopes were raised when Austria became hostile, and the Continent was stirred by a movement against its tyrant. The English Ministry determined to make a great effort; an expedition was to be fitted out to destroy Antwerp, and even to invade the Low Countries; a British army was to be sent out again to support the Spanish and the Portuguese risings. Wellesley, whose ability in Portugal was

now fully recognised, and who in Castlereagh had a faithful and lifelong friend, was fortunately placed at the head of this new force; he had already given proof of profound sagacity in considering the nature of the Peninsular contest, and in perceiving how it could be made disastrous to the arms of France and be turned to advantage for those of England. His deep-laid plans were not as yet to be realised; but even now, in more than one masterly despatch,[1] he had indicated how Portugal was exactly the theatre in which Napoleon was to be encountered in his career of conquest. England's command of the sea made that little country easy of access to any army she might land on its shores, and afforded facilities of retreat to that army. Portugal could only with difficulty be invaded by France; at the same time it formed a kind of sallyport from which even a comparatively small force might fall on the long line of the communications of the French with Spain, and might check and mar their operations with very great effect. Portugal, besides, had long been a friendly State; the people, like the Spaniards, detested the French; and a Portuguese army could, no doubt, be formed, which, aided by levies of partisans, could give powerful assistance to a British commander. Portugal, in a word, was a formidable place of arms for England; and if the Spanish armies in the field had been scattered like sheep, the Spanish insurrection, breaking out from the Pyrenees to Cadiz, and wasting the strength of the invaders, wherever they

[1] One of the earliest of these despatches, dated 7th March, 1809, will be found in the *Selections*, pp. 248–249.

were found, was a real, nay, a great element of resisting force, especially in such a land as Spain, with its ranges of sierras, its intricate defiles, its ill-cultivated and poor tracts, its numerous and difficult river lines, — all obstacles to the operations of regular armies, notably under Napoleon's peculiar system of war.[1]

Wellesley landed at Lisbon in the last days of April, 1809, and was welcomed in that capital with general acclaim; his conduct at Vimiero had not been forgotten. Time had not been lost to enable him to take the field; preparations for a campaign had been diligently made. Sir John Cradock had a force of some 10,000 men in Portugal, and had done something to provide for transports and magazines; considerable reinforcements had arrived from England; the regular Portuguese army, nearly 20,000 strong, had been organised by Beresford and other British officers, and there were large bodies of irregular Portuguese levies. Wellesley was in command of from 40,000 to 50,000 men, 26,000 of these being British and German troops: he held a central position between Victor and Soult, now divided from each other by a great distance; the first question for him was which of the marshals he should attack. Victor certainly was the enemy nearest at hand; he had won two battles, besides that of Medellin; he lay around Merida on the Guadiana; with Lapisse and Sabastiani he was more than 30,000 strong.

[1] For an excellent account of the topography of Spain from a military point of view, see Mr. Oman's *History of the Peninsular War*, i., 72–89.

But he had been singularly inactive since his late victories; he had refused to invade Portugal at the instance of King Joseph; he had shown that he had no wish to co-operate with Soult—another example of the jealousies and the discords of the French commanders. Wellesley resolved to make his principal effort against Soult; but he took precautions against an offensive movement by Victor; detachments of about 14,000 men were marched towards the frontier to hold that Marshal in check; Wellesley set off with an army 25,000 strong—nearly 10,000 were Portuguese troops — to begin his operations against Soult. He had reached Coimbra in the first days of May, even now not very far from his enemy, who, since the fall of Oporto, after frightful deeds of blood, had remained almost inactive around the city, endeavouring, not in vain, to restore peace and order, but apparently ignorant that the British General was on the march. Soult unquestionably was a very able man, and showed remarkable energy in grave crises; but his disposition was somewhat indolent and remiss, faults of which he gave many proofs in his career. His army was now divided into two parts, one on the Vouga, one on the Tamega, feeders of the Douro on either side of the great river; they were separated by a rather wide distance; and he was also harassed by a kind of peasant warfare. He was beset, moreover, by another danger, of which at this moment he knew nothing,—a conspiracy had been formed by officers in his camp, with the object of returning to France, and, perhaps, of overthrowing Napoleon. This de-

sign, insensate as it may seem, was not without real mischief; it was injurious, in the highest degree, to military subordination and trustworthy discipline.[1] The army of the Marshal, disseminated and weakened in this way, was probably not more than 20,000 strong; it was thus inferior in numbers to that of Wellesley.

The British General was on the march for Oporto, by Coimbra, on the 9th of May; he had detached Beresford, with some 6000 men, aided by irregular bodies of Portuguese, to turn the enemy's left wing on the Tamega, and, if possible, to intercept the line of his retreat. Wellesley had been in communication with one of the traitors, and had ascertained the positions of the French army; he advanced along the line of the coast to Vouga, taking advantage of a lake, which formed a ferry for part of his army. The right wing of the French was soon turned; an indecisive engagement was fought at a place called Grijon, but the French General in command made good his retreat, and, having reached Oporto without much loss, destroyed the bridge of boats on the Douro, which formed the only means of communication across the river. Meanwhile Soult had been informed of the treason around him, and of the approach of Wellesley's army; he instantly made preparations to break up from Oporto, and to make good his way into Spain, through the province of Trasos Montes, the line which he had taken when in-

[1] There seems to be little real authority for the statement made by Thiébault and other writers, that Soult was aspiring to the crown of Portugal,

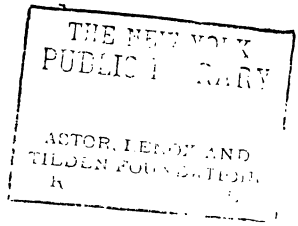
vading Portugal. His dispositions seemed to make him perfectly secure, and he probably would have been so, if he had not had to deal with an adversary of extraordinary skill and resource in the field. The Marshal took care to seize every boat and barge by which the passage of the Douro could be effected; he collected these craft on the bank he held, and placed bodies of troops to guard it. The Douro was about three hundred yards wide; how could Wellesley cross it, in the face of a brave army? the obstacle might well have been deemed impossible to surmount. At the same time Soult made arrangements to secure the line of his retreat, which appeared to be ample and indeed ought to have been sufficient. His retrograde movement would be across the Tamega, at the bridge of Amarante, which afforded the only means of passage; he directed his lieutenant, Loison, to occupy that point, and to keep any enemy away from it; it was almost the only avenue of escape for the French army. A most disastrous incident, however, here occurred, for which the Marshal was in no sense responsible, but which nearly brought ruin down on him in the events which followed. Beresford, operating with his detachment, crossed the Tamega; Loison fell back, making hardly any resistance; the bridge at Amarante was thus seized by Wellesley's lieutenant, and the true line of retreat for Soult and his army was closed! At the same time Soult had not, perhaps, taken all the precautions he ought to have taken against a bold and able enemy. The conspiracy among his officers still existed, causing dan-

gerous slackness and neglect of duty: the Marshal did not guard his bank of the Douro with a sufficient force; he was convinced that if the passage were attempted at all, it would be attempted lower down the river near its mouth; he turned his attention in that direction; above all, thinking himself perfectly safe, he lingered at Oporto at least a day too long, and contented himself with sending part of his impedimenta out of the city.

It was the 12th of May. Wellesley could not know that Beresford was closing on the French line of retreat; but he had determined, if it were possible, to cross the Douro. On the 11th, he had sent Colonel John Murray with a detachment of a few thousand men to try to effect a passage higher up the river; but how was he to cross it himself under the very beard of Soult? His dispositions, favoured by peculiarities of the ground, and seconded, in a most remarkable way, by an accident, were as admirable as have ever been made in an operation of the kind, and were attended with brilliant and complete success. A high eminence, on which a convent was built, rose on the bank, occupied by his outposts; a large edifice, called the Seminary, which in its enclosures could form a shelter for some hundreds of men, spread along the French bank, opposite to the convent; the British General chose this point as that in which he would make his venture. He had carefully reconnoitred the ground on which the convent stood; he had perceived that the French bank was not well guarded; but the principal difficulty still remained,—he was as yet without the means

to ferry his army across the Douro. Propitious Fortune here came to his aid: a poor citizen of Oporto had, before daybreak, rowed a skiff unobserved to the British bank; he recrossed the stream with a bold staff officer; three or four barges were brought to the selected spot; meanwhile some twenty guns were placed on the height around the convent, and troops were secretly posted behind the hill, the forlorn hope that was to make the first effort. The Seminary was soon seized, but only by a handful of men: it is a signal proof how ill the French outposts did their work, that three barges at least had got over the Douro, and had occupied the Seminary, with a not inconsiderable force, before the enemy had the least notion of what was taking place; the surprise, in fact, was discreditable and complete. The French now fell on the troops, who had gathered within the kind of fortress marked out for them; but they were ravaged by the fire of the guns from the hill and the convent; the population of Oporto sent a number of barges to the help of Wellesley; the British army was before long across the Douro. Meanwhile the columns of Murray were seen advancing; they, too, had passed the river higher up; this was the signal for a precipitate retreat of the enemy; Soult's whole army hastened out of Oporto, leaving guns and stores behind, and losing many men; it made for the roads leading to Amarante, where the Marshal expected to find Loison. Had Murray acted with vigour he must have destroyed a large part of the defeated host; it exposed, in its flight, its flanks to him; but he missed

LORD WELLESLEY.
(From the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence.)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his opportunity, whatever the cause; he allowed the enemy to escape scot-free.

The campaign on the Douro, above all, the passage of the great river under the very eyes of Soult, were signal instances of what Wellesley could achieve in war. He owed something, indeed, to treason in his adversary's camp, and something to the remissness shown by the French Marshal; an accident enabled him to find the means of sending a petty detachment across the stream; but all this does not in the least detract from his merit. He gave proof of marked skill in sending Beresford to threaten the French line of retreat, though he could hardly have anticipated the success he gained; he took the right course in advancing from Coimbra upon Oporto. But the passage of the Douro was the great exploit; it was a most conspicuous exhibition of resource in tactics. Wellesley properly detached John Murray to cross the river higher up: had his lieutenant acted with boldness and energy, the French army must have suffered enormous losses. The selection, however, of the true point where to make the passage was the finest specimen on this occasion of Wellesley's powers; remarkable insight was shown in choosing the Seminary as a kind of place of arms, where the British troops on landing would be comparatively safe; the hill and the convent formed excellent screens behind which the assailants could be formed, and good points of vantage for artillery be obtained; the surprise, in a word, was most admirably contrived. The dispositions of Soult, on the other hand, though the

conspiracy in his army, of which he had no idea until the last moment, did him much harm, were hardly equal to the reputation of that distinguished soldier. He divided his forces on two rivers; they were parted by the great stream of the Douro; he did not sufficiently guard the bank he held at Oporto; he may perhaps have left Loison too few troops to cover what was all but his sole line of retreat. Yet the conduct of the Marshal, after his first reverse, was worthy of a general of no ordinary powers. When he found Amarante and its bridge seized, and his best avenue of escape closed, he might have been involved in another Baylen; pusillanimous voices urged him to treat, like Junot at the Convention of Cintra. But the Marshal scorned these counsels of despair; rising to meet a terrible crisis with a bold decision, he destroyed his impedimenta, abandoned his guns, and led his army by mere mountainous tracks across a range of sierras from which a retreat might be yet possible though the difficulties were extreme. The toilsome march of the French was impeded by torrents and obstacles of many kinds; the heroism of individual soldiers was conspicuously displayed, and at last 12,000 or 14,000 men, a disorganised wreck, for the moment worthless, made good their way to Orense beyond the Portuguese frontier. Wellesley did not at once pursue Soult, he only just reached the retiring enemy: for this he has incurred some censure. He certainly was not at his best in following a defeated enemy: but there were sound military reasons for the halt he made at Oporto for a single day.

After the passage of the Douro, Wellesley fell back on Abrantes, in order to watch the operations of Victor, and of the other forces that seemed to menace Portugal. A long pause in his movements followed: it was not until nearly the end of June that his army was on the march again. This delay has been made a charge against him,—and he was different from Turenne and Napoleon, when in a central position between divided enemies,—but it should be more justly ascribed to causes independent of himself. His soldiers were exceedingly ill supplied, owing to the neglect of the men in power in Portugal: they lost a great number of comrades by disease: even their pay was very considerably in arrears, for the treasury at home was severely pressed. Under these adverse conditions they began to give proof of one of the characteristic defects of a British army, the tendency to break up, and to lose heart, when in the presence of continual hardship; and they plundered the whole country around with audacious licence. Despite its commander's angry complaints, and the severe examples that he was forced to make, it was some time before the discipline of his forces was restored; meanwhile arrangements had been made for another effort to co-operate with the Spanish armies, and to assist the national insurrection of Spain. A plan of campaign was formed, the least well-conceived of Wellesley's projects in war, and based on complete ignorance of facts of supreme importance. By this time Napoleon, repairing the false steps taken by Berthier, had utterly defeated the Archduke Charles in operations

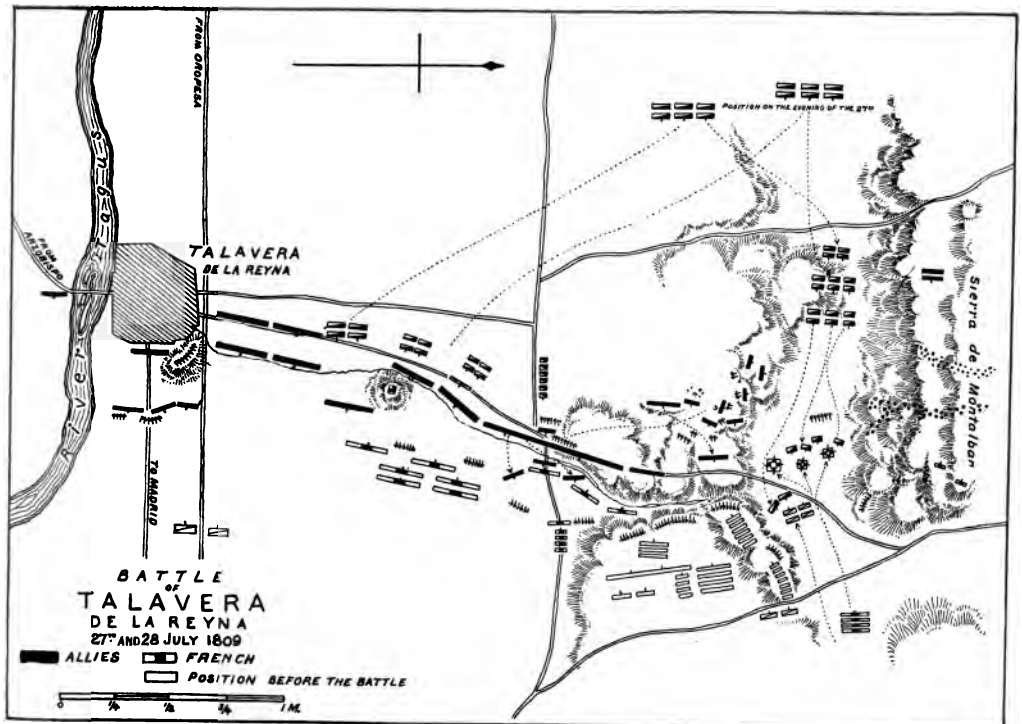
as fine as any in his career; he had entered Vienna in triumph for the second time; but he had met a serious rebuff at Aspern; he appeared to be in grave peril upon the Danube; the opinion that his fall was not distant had strengthened in England and elsewhere. His armies, too, in Spain, had been reduced; the passage of the Douro was an augury of success; the French had not ventured to invade Portugal; it was in these circumstances that the design to which we have referred was formed. Wellesley's army had been reinforced and was perhaps 22,000 strong; a Spanish army of about 40,000 men was in Estremadura under Cuesta; another Spanish army commanded by Venegas was behind the Sierra Morena, perhaps 25,000 strong; it was agreed that Wellesley and Cuesta should unite their forces, and should march up the valley of the Tagus on Madrid, while Venegas, advancing through La Mancha, should second the movement. The combined forces, should they join hands, would thus be a host of nearly 90,000 men; but such a concentration was improbable in the extreme; and the project did not make sufficient allowance for the miserable quality of the Spanish armies: for the risk of Wellesley's and Cuesta's march: for the strength of the French armies around Madrid: above all, for the hostile forces that might be arrayed behind the screen of the lofty sierras, overlooking the valley of the Tagus from the north, and might be directed with terrible effect on the flank and the rear of the enemy in his advance.

Wellesley and Cuesta, advancing at wide distances, moved up the valley of the Tagus, in the first

days of July, and were at Placencia and Almaraz by the 10th of the month. The British General trusted to Beresford, in Trasos Montes, and to some Portuguese levies, to protect his march, and to cover his flank and rear, should any enemy descend through the Sierra passes, but these supports were far away and wholly inadequate; he had no conception of the forces that might be combined against him. Meanwhile Venegas had begun to move through La Mancha; but though his operations disconcerted King Joseph, and caused a dangerous division of the French armies, the Spanish commander never approached Madrid, or came into line with the allies he was intended to join; it has been said this was the fault of one of the Spanish juntas. For a time, however, the prospects of Wellesley and Cuesta seemed good: they advanced without any apparent sign of peril at hand; on the 23rd of July an opportunity arose to attack and to defeat Victor, who was isolated near Talavera, Joseph and Sebastiani having marched from the capital in order to observe the movement of Venegas: Wellesley urged his colleague to fall on the enemy, but Cuesta, an aged, obstinate, and ill-tempered man, lost precious time, and practically refused to move; Victor fell back towards Toledo, and was for the moment safe. Cuesta, when apprised of Victor's retreat, recklessly pushed forward to attack the Marshal; Wellesley sent him a reinforcement of a small body of troops, but would not follow his imprudent ally; in fact, his army had been wretchedly supplied on its march, in consequence of Spanish carelessness and

neglect, and was already suffering from many privations. A transformation was soon seen on the theatre of events; Joseph, assisted by Jourdan, the veteran chief of his staff, and Sebastiani ceasing to watch Venegas,—that General was many leagues distant,—united their forces with those of Victor; the combined armies advanced to Talavera in the last days of July: Cuesta with difficulty made his escape. More than 50,000 excellent French soldiers were thus being concentrated against an enemy whose army was mainly composed of bad troops, and of men weakened by severe hardships; meanwhile another peril was already not far off, which might have proved simply fatal to the allies. Napoleon, from the banks of the Danube, had perceived the risk Wellesley and Cuesta ran, in marching up the valley of the Tagus towards Madrid, when largely superior forces could be thrown on their flank and rear; with characteristic insight and resource this greatest of strategists saw the favourable chance; he directed Soult, whom he placed in supreme command, to assemble a great force composed of his own corps, which had been quickly reorganised and restored, of the corps of Ney, and of the corps of Mortier; and with these combined armies, to pass through the Sierras from the north, to join hands with all the armies under the command of Joseph, and then to fall in irresistible strength on the enemy, who, should he continue his march, could hardly be saved from complete destruction.[1]

[1] Napier has misdescribed Napoleon's project, as his correspondence was not then published. It will be found in *Corr.*, xix., p. 263, in


FROM OROPESA
TALAVERA
DE LA REYNA
TO MADRID
POSITION ON THE EVENING OF THE 27TH
Sierra de Montalban
BATTLE
of
TALAVERA
DE LA REYNA
27TH AND 28 JULY 1809
ALLIES
FRENCH
POSITION BEFORE THE BATTLE
1/4
1/2
3/4
1 M.

Partly, however, owing to the distances between the French marshals, but largely to dissensions between them,—the curse of the French in the Peninsular War,—and to orders wrongly given by Joseph to Mortier, the march of Soult was considerably delayed; the grand conception of Napoleon was not realised. Nevertheless, Soult, with the three corps of which he had been made the chief, was around Salamanca in the latter days of July; that is, he was now only four or five marches distant from the gap in the Sierras which would lead him into the Tagus valley, and would place him on the flank and rear of the enemy, with a veteran army fully 50,000 strong. The Marshal wrote to King Joseph by a confidential officer, the General Foy of another day, entreating the King not to attempt "to fight a general action until all his forces were near Placencia," that is, had emerged from the passes in the Sierras, and were on the line of the allied retreat; in that event, he insisted, "the most important results might be obtained: the enemy would be lost if he did not retrace his steps." This plan, if less perfect than that of the Emperor, for it involved an operation

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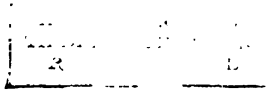
a letter written from Schoenbrunn, July 18, 1809: "Recommandez au Roi d'Espagne que, si les Anglais débouchaient en Espagne, il ne leur livre point de bataille qu'il ne soit réuni. Il a le 4e Corps, le garnison de Madrid, le 1er Corps; ce qui fait plus de 50,000 hommes. Les 2e, 6e, et 5e Corps forment une soixantaine de mille hommes: il peut donc donner bataille aux Anglais avec 110,000 hommes." The project is more fully developed in *Corr.*, xix., p. 373. The Emperor disapproved of all the French operations that followed, and indicated the very means by which Wellesley actually escaped the net that seemed closing around him. See *Corr.*, xix., pp. 315, 346, 379.

conducted on double lines,—strategy, as a rule, not to be commended,—was, nevertheless, promising in the highest degree, if only Joseph would not make a premature attack, and Wellesley and Cuesta remained where they were; and at this moment, it must be borne in mind, neither Wellesley nor Cuesta had an inkling of the approach of Soult. Two armies, therefore, each of 50,000 good troops, might not improbably be assembled to fall on a single army, not nearly half equal in real strength; the overthrow of the allies would, in that event, be almost assured, especially as one of the armies would be on their flank and rear; their escape, indeed, would be difficult in the extreme. But Joseph, confident in the power of the forces of which he was nominally the head, and like Marmont on another occasion, eager to secure a victory for himself alone, resolved to attack Wellesley and Cuesta, before he could be joined by Soult,—presumptuous, reckless, and wrong conduct, which justly incensed the Emperor when made aware of the facts.

Wellesley and Cuesta were at Talavera by this time, a small town on the northern bank of the Tagus. The Spaniard gave the command to the Englishman, but with a bad grace; Wellesley rightly determined to await the attack of the enemy; retreat, in truth, would have been fatal to his composite and weakened army. His arrangements gave proof of the skill in tactics in which he had hardly an equal among the generals of his age. He arrayed the Spanish army, about 34,000 strong, but un-trustworthy troops in every sense of the word, from

MARSHAL NEY.
(After the painting by Gerard.)



Talavera on its extreme right, to an eminence crowned with a redoubt on its extreme left; its front was protected by a convent, a breastwork, ditches, and stockades; its rear was supported by its own and some British cavalry. Its position was thus very difficult to assail; Wellesley's army extended from Cuesta's left to a hill which was the key of the whole battlefield; the united forces held a front of about two miles. The Spanish army numbered, we have seen, some 34,000 men, the British 19,000 or 20,000, the allies had perhaps 100 guns; in real strength they were far inferior to their foes. A prelude to the battle that followed took place; it was not of the best omen to the allied armies. The French crossed the Alberche near Talavera on the 27th of July; they were at least 50,000 with 80 guns: they were good soldiers, nearly all of one brave nation, the British soldiers alone were worthy of their steel. A sharp skirmish, that began with a surprise, was fought at a spot called the Casa de Salinas; Wellesley narrowly escaped being made a prisoner; signs of confusion appeared in one or two British regiments; a great mass of Spaniards left the field in precipitate flight. This brilliant effort had been conducted by Victor. The Marshal, elated with his first success, made a bold attempt to storm the height on Wellesley's left; he very nearly attained his object, but his men were at last beaten off after a fierce struggle. It was now nightfall; both armies took their ground, and made preparations for the fight of the morrow.

The stern battle of Talavera was fought on the

28th of July, 1809. Victor insisted on a trial of strength against Jourdan's counsels. The French chiefs were already at odds with each other; the ground was scarcely reconnoitred, an unpardonable fault. Victor, however, had perceived the true point of attack; almost disregarding the Spanish army, he directed the divisions of Ruffin and Villatte, covered by a heavy fire of guns, against the decisive spot, the hill; a bloody and well-contested fight was the result; the French more than once almost reached the summit; the losses were considerable on both sides, but Victor's men were again driven off in defeat. A long pause in the operations followed: Jourdan urged Joseph to run no further risk, and to wait until he should be joined by Soult; Victor, impetuous and thoughtless, exclaimed that "one might give up war if the hill could not be stormed." The attack was now conducted by the mass of the French army, and was somewhat better directed than it had been before. The Spaniards were again almost unassailed; but the divisions of Sebastiani, Lapisse, and Ruffin were marshalled to fall on Wellesley's centre and left; Villatte was ordered to reach the hill by a turning movement, through a valley that spread beyond the British left; a small body of cavalry was to second the movement. The superiority in numbers of the French thus collected to attack the British was enormous, nearly two to one, but Wellesley had his arrangements made; he had extended his left beyond the hill to cover the valley, when Villatte's movement was being developed; he steadily awaited a most formidable attack. The

battle raged fiercely for several hours: Villatte's men were stopped in their advance by the British cavalry, and ultimately were compelled to fall back; but a British regiment of dragoons was well-nigh cut to pieces, having—a common fault—rushed forward and got out of hand. Meantime a furious onslaught had been made on the hill, and the whole of Wellesley's line was searched by the enemy's guns, while the hostile columns boldly advanced and endeavoured to break it. The attack was all but crowned with success; the British centre was forced at one point, the troops having got out of order on uneven ground, always a danger for a line in its movements; but the battle was restored by a veteran regiment, the 48th; the French gradually relaxed their efforts, and ultimately drew off from the blood-stained field. The losses on both sides were very large, from 6000 to 7000 men; but 17 French guns were abandoned and taken; Wellesley remained victorious on the position he had held. Owing probably to the disputes between Jourdan and Victor, the reserve of the French army, 12,000 strong, was not engaged, and did not fire a shot, an exhibition of weakness succeeding rash confidence.

After Talavera King Joseph fell back towards Madrid, leaving Victor on the Alberche to join hands with Soult, but isolated for the moment, with Wellesley in his front. The British General, however, did not venture to fall on; he was always, perhaps, overcautious on occasions of this kind; but his army had cruelly suffered, and was greatly weakened; his Spanish allies were but of little worth.

Meanwhile a storm was gathering on his flank and rear, the approach of which he had, very unaccountably, hardly considered possible. By the 4th of August Soult had traversed the passes through the Sierras; his whole army could be assembled in a few days; he made ready to attack his enemy, though Talavera had baffled his excellent advice. Wellesley had not even yet been informed of the Marshal's advance, he had marched to Oropesa, near the enemy's mouth, so to speak; but gradually he ascertained a part, at least, of the truth; learning that Soult was at no great distance, he brushed Cuesta's idle entreaties aside, fell back on the Tagus, and crossed at the bridge of Arzopisbo, the very point Napoleon had foreseen he might select in the case of the operations conducted by Soult. The Marshal, however, did not abandon his quarry; he directed Mortier to seize the bridge at Almaraz, lower down the river, and to intercept the enemy's retreat; he endeavoured in person to press the pursuit; he urged Joseph and his lieutenants to advance and join him. But Joseph set off again to observe Venegas, and had recalled Victor from the Alberche; Wellesley safely effected his retreat on Merida and reached, unmolested, the Portuguese frontier, at Badajoz.[1] Yet the chances were that he would have been meshed in the toils Soult had carefully prepared, had Joseph not gone off in a false direction, and had he not been terrified by the movement of some of Wellesley's levies; the "fate of the Peninsula hung for a few days on a

[1] Wellesley's account of his campaign of 1809 will be found in *Selection*, pp. 325–337.

thread which could not have borne the weight for even twenty-four hours."[1] Soult, however, did not forego his purpose, though his first combination had been a failure; he proposed to assemble his army at Coria, near the borders of Portugal, and, supported by Joseph in force, to invade that kingdom, perhaps even to descend on Lisbon. But Ney refused to obey his orders; the King was too timid to give his consent; Napoleon always contended that even at the eleventh hour a grand opportunity had been thrown away.

Wellesley was given a peerage for Talavera, in spite of querulous and shallow Opposition protests; thenceforward he was to be known by the honoured name of Wellington. His skill and resource appear in this campaign on the Tagus; he rightly accepted the challenge of Victor; he arranged his enfeebled army ably on the ground; he plucked not safety, but victory, out of no doubtful danger. His retreat by the bridge of Arzopisbo was also an excellent movement, giving proof of quick resolution and firmness of purpose; he extricated himself admirably from foes who seemed closing around him. But his strategy in the campaign was faulty; it was not well designed, it was founded on false assumptions. The advance on double and distant lines was a hazardous scheme; the quality of the Spanish armies was not sufficiently gauged: above all, the strength of the French behind the Sierras was not even guessed at; it was deemed impossible that they could descend on the allied flank and rear. Wellesley, in a word,

[1] Napier, i., p. 384.

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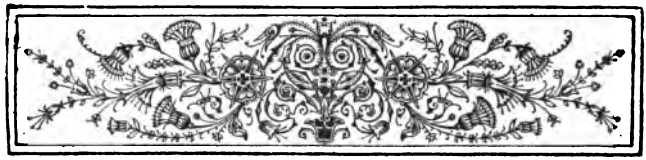
was in the air as he moved along the Tagus, and exposed to attacks that might well have been fatal; had Napoleon directed the French armies he could hardly have avoided an immense disaster; and but for the presumptuous recklessness of Victor and the weakness of Joseph, the chances were that he would have been beaten, perhaps surrounded, by Soult. The best proof that he knew he had made grave mistakes was that he never ventured on such an enterprise again; the conditions had changed when he invaded Spain on two other occasions. As for the operations of his adversaries, if we except those of Soult, who proved his capacity as a real chief, they were badly conducted from first to last. Victor ought not to have fought at Talavera at all, until Soult had come into line with Joseph and himself; this was a gross, nay, an inexcusable fault; Joseph more than once allowed his enemy to escape through weakness, irresolution, and absolutely false movements.[1] The French commanders of a fine army also were found wanting at Talavera; they did not really examine the ground; they wasted their strength in premature attacks; above all, they left the field without engaging their reserve, irresolution that incensed their master.[2] Owing to these many

[1] Napoleon was justly indignant at the results of the campaign, *Corr.*, xix., 362: "Quelle belle occasion on a manqué; 30,000 Anglais à 150 lieues des côtes devant 100,000 hommes des meillieurs troupes du monde! Mon dieu! Qu'est-ce qu'une armée sans chef!"

[2] The comments of the Emperor on Talavera were rightly severe. I have only space for a few words. *Corr.*, xix., 379: "Cette position de l'ennemi exigeait donc des reconnaissances préalables, et qu'on a conduit mes troupes sans discernement, comme à la boucherie; qu'

faults and shortcomings, Wellesley eluded his foes, and even marred the operations of Soult; the campaign ultimately was of advantage to him. It taught him not to trust Spanish levies; it impressed Napoleon with the false belief that he "was a rash, presumptuous, and ignorant man," a fixed idea that he held to even on the field of Waterloo. The British General now resolved to establish himself in Portugal, and, in pursuance of his original design, to defend the Peninsula from that strong point of vantage. He was soon to enter on a passage of arms, the real crown of his military career; he was to make his position in Portugal secure, and, as it were, from this impregnable lair to defy his enemies; he was to become a thorn in the side of the giant, which was to fester and produce the "Spanish ulcer," not the least of the manifold causes of the giant's collapse.

enfin, étant résolu à la bataille, on l'a donnée mollement, puisque mes armes ont essayé un affront, et que 12,000 hommes de reserve sont cependant restés sans tirer."



CHAPTER V

BUSACO, TORRES VEDRAS, FUENTES D'ONORO

The supremacy of Napoleon on the Continent restored after Wagram—His efforts to extend the Continental System—Spain and Portugal threatened with subjugation—This might have happened had Napoleon conducted the war in person—False operations of the French armies—The invasion of Andalusia—Farsighted views of Wellington—His presence on the theatre of the Peninsular War of supreme importance—His preparations for the defence of Portugal—Increase and reorganisation of the Portuguese army—The lines of Torres Vedras—Grandeur of this conception and of the position of Wellington—Napoleon prepares to invade Portugal in complete ignorance of Wellington's arrangements—Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida—Advance of Massena—Battle of Busaco and defeat of the French—Further advance of Massena—He is permanently arrested by the lines—His position at Santarem—Soult at Badajoz—Retreat of Massena—Pursuit of Wellington—The French army forced back into Spain—Battle of Fuentes d'Onoro—The garrison of Almeida escapes—Disgrace of Massena.

BY the close of 1809 and during the months that followed, Napoleon might have exclaimed with Richard, that the "lowering clouds had been buried in the ocean's bosom." After the reverse at Aspern, he had risen superior to fortune, had boldly maintained his hold on the Danube, and

gathering his forces together with marvels of resource and skill, had defeated the Archduke Charles in the hard-fought battle of Wagram. Austria had bowed once more to the will of her victorious enemy, had ceded territory, and had accepted an humiliating peace; ere long she had thrown her Imperial daughter into the arms of her conqueror, as a pledge of submission to his all-powerful mandates. The Continent hid again its diminished head: the Czar, who had been lukewarm in the campaign on the Danube, returned, in profession at least, to the policy of Tilsit and Erfurt; the patriotic movement in Germany ceased; the supremacy of France seemed assured from the Rhine to the Vistula. In Italy Murat had been placed on the throne of Naples, and had been ordered to make a descent on Sicily. The Pope had been carried off from the Vatican, and had been thrown into gilded bondage; a French army occupied Rome; the spiritual power of many centuries seemed effaced by the material tyranny of the sword. England remained, no doubt, the mistress of the seas, and still, though unaided, maintained the contest; but she had lost a fine army in the swamps of Walcheren; the Douro and Talavera seemed fruitless triumphs. Her finances were subjected to a tremendous trial; and though her commerce and manufactures still bore the strain, and her real prosperity had not been decidedly checked, she was suffering much from the effects of the Continental System, and from the attempts to shut her out from trading with the civilised world. The quarrel, too, between Castlereagh

and Canning had weakened her Government, and distracted her councils; there was a prospect that the Opposition might acquire power: if so, the new Ministry would hardly continue the war. Meanwhile, Napoleon, again the lord of the best part of Europe, was concentrating his strength against his one obstinate enemy: notwithstanding repeated defeats and failures, he was building fleets and fitting out expeditions at sea: he still looked forward to his great "battle of Actium." But his indomitable will and commanding energies were chiefly directed, at this conjuncture, to the extension and the perfection of the Continental System, from which, blind to what experience was already proving, and ignorant of what the future was to bring forth, he drew a certain presage of the approaching ruin of England. Reckless that the prohibition of trade with his foe impoverished and exasperated every State on the Continent, and that his policy urged him on to universal conquest, he annexed Holland to his overgrown Empire; he made the Hanse towns departments of France, and carried her frontier seawards far beyond the Elbe, in the fixed conviction that by these acts of unscrupulous force he would, in his own phrase, "subdue the sea by the land," and compel England to become one of his many vassals.

The domination of Napoleon over the Continent seemed also about to be made complete, in the spring and the summer of 1810, by the subjugation of the whole Iberian Peninsula. The results of the Campaign of 1809, especially the operations upon the Tagus, had filled the Emperor with indig-

nant wrath; his arms in Spain and in Portugal were to be defied no longer. As had happened after Baylen, so after Wagram he moved enormous forces across the Pyrenees; 100,000 soldiers at least were added to the legions that maintained the war; his armies were fully 370,000 strong, and were largely composed of his best troops. For a time it appeared as if nothing could withstand the overwhelming torrent of French invasion that spread from beyond the Ebro to the Pillars of Hercules. In the East Suchet kept down Aragon, quenched the flame of insurrection in Navarre, was preparing to attack Valencian fortresses. Catalonia had yielded to the arms of St. Cyr and Augereau; Gerona had fallen after a memorable siege, worthy of the heroic defence of Saragossa. An army upheld the throne of the usurper at Madrid; and occupied the valley of the upper Tagus; a great force had been assembled to avenge Baylen, to overrun Andalusia, and to complete its conquest. This host, directed by Soult, with Joseph at its head, swept easily through the Sierra Morena passes, spread over the fine adjoining regions until it approached the sea, took Cordova, Seville, and other important cities, and, carrying desolation and terror in its train, was stopped only before the lagoons of Cadiz, which seemed the last refuge of the independence of Spain. Meanwhile Napoleon had fixed his gaze on Portugal, and had resolved not only to annex that country, but to make it a theatre for a reverse to England and to the British army, which had appeared on its coasts. Another great force was being assembled on the

frontiers of Leon; it was amply sustained by powerful reserves; its mission was to crush every enemy in its path and to advance in triumph to the Portuguese capital. Nor could even the most experienced soldier, nay, the conqueror himself—conducting the war from a distance, and far removed from the scene of events—understand how a real resistance could be made to this formidable display of the military force which had laid the Continent at the feet of its master. The Spanish rising, indeed, was perhaps fiercer than ever; the Spanish levies had been formed into warlike bands known by the significant name of Guerrillas, and had found skilful and patriotic leaders; several of the Spanish towns had long kept the invaders at bay. But the Spanish armies were being routed over and over again; a pitched battle had been fought at Ocana, and had only lead to a frightful disaster, and though their shattered fragments invariably drew towards each other, and were animated by a really national spirit, it seemed impossible that they could keep the field. And what could a handful of British soldiers, even though backed by Portuguese levies, effect against the gigantic might of Napoleon employed to bring the Peninsula within his grasp? It appeared to be no idle boast when the Emperor announced to his Senate that "the English Leopard would be driven into the sea," and that "the Tricolor would soon wave over Lisbon and Cadiz."

Had Napoleon at this turning-point in his career seized the occasion when he bestrode the Continent, and had he directed the war in Portugal and Spain

himself; had he followed the principles of his own strategy, and made the best use of his military power; had he established a real Government at Madrid, and made his quarrelling lieutenants obey his commands, it is probable that in spite of all the obstacles he would have met, he would have conquered the Iberian Peninsula, at least for a time. But the Continental System was at present his principal care, and this detained him at Paris, the centre of his affairs; he could hardly leave his young consort, Marie Louise; he had begun to dislike a national struggle in a most difficult country, which an Austerlitz or a Jena could not bring to a close[1]; he kept away from what was now the main scene of events; and yet, like Louis XIV. in another age, he controlled from his capital a war far beyond the Pyrenees, conduct certain to lead to defeats, nay, disasters. This was one of the principal mistakes of his life; it was characteristic, not of a master of war, but of a mere despot; he acknowledged it, in exile, many years afterwards. How the colossal edifice of his tyranny in three-fourths of the Continent toppled down and fell in a tremendous ruin, belongs to the province of European History; how it came to the same end in Portugal and Spain is largely connected with the same subject; and it was due to many and different causes. But of these not the least was the presence on the theatre of war of the great soldier who maintained the contest for England,

[1] Wellington was an admirable military critic. He has remarked over and over again, that impatience was a defect of Napoleon in war.

and his commanding influence on the course of events; it is unquestionable that the wisdom and the sword of Wellington threw a decisive weight into the scales of Fortune. By this time the British commander had, with a capacity and insight peculiar to himself, mastered the conditions of the struggle in the Peninsula hopeless as it appeared to the majority even of the ablest men; he believed that, in certain circumstances, it could be carried on with success, even against the overwhelming power of Napoleon. He had never abandoned the idea he had from the first, that Portugal was the true point from which the Peninsula could be defended by England; his deep-laid projects for such a defence had been formed; they had been confirmed by his recent experiences in Spain, especially by what had happened after Talavera. At this conjuncture, he had grasped the real state of affairs, in Spain and Portugal, with unerring judgment; being on the spot he understood it much better than the Emperor could do, hundreds of miles away in Paris. He had rightly deemed that Napoleon's principal effort in the Peninsula would be made against Portugal [1]; but having regard to the position of the French armies, he believed that that effort could be made a failure. He had properly condemned the invasion of Andalusia and the consequent dissemination of the enemy's forces as a distinct and momentous military mistake [2]; this, he was convinced, would tell powerfully in the operations at hand. He put little or no trust in the Spanish armies, as was

[1] *Selection*, pp. 313–317.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 434.

natural after the events of 1809; he possibly estimated them below their worth; but he clearly perceived that the Spanish rising would prove an immense obstacle to the invaders; would impede check, nay, perhaps paralyse their movements on the general theatre of the war. In these circumstances Wellington contended that if the resources of Portugal were properly employed, and if England remained true to herself, that nook in the Peninsula could even now be made a stronghold from which the forces of Napoleon could be made to recoil.[1]

Wellington, after his retreat from Talavera, had kept his army around Badajoz for some time. His troops suffered from disease in unhealthy cantonments, and for this he has been somewhat rudely blamed; but his position on the Guadiana can be fully justified. The juntas, which had been the heads of the great rising of Spain, had been represented by a Central Junta, which had been assembled at Aranjuez and Seville; the Central Junta had taken refuge at Cadiz, and had been replaced by a more regular government; a project had been formed to convene the Cortes, the time-honoured Parliament of the Spanish monarchy. At the same time Cadiz was making a stubborn defence; the place was exceedingly difficult to attack; it had successfully

[1] Wellington wrote this in November 1809: "I conceive that until Spain shall have been conquered and shall have submitted to the conqueror, the enemy will find it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain possession of Portugal; if His Majesty should continue to employ an army in the defence of this country, and if the improvements in the Portuguese military service should be carried to the extent of which they are capable."—*Selection*, pp. 313–314.

defied the efforts of Victor; it had the support of a British fleet; a considerable force, composed partly of Spanish, partly of British troops, had been collected to oppose the besieging enemy. Wellington wished, when near Badajoz, to be within reach of the new Spanish Government, and to give it countenance as well as he could; in this position, besides, he threatened the French invaders in the valley of the Tagus and in Andalusia,—these already greatly scattered and weakened,—and he protected the south-eastern frontier of Portugal. But during this period his powerful mind was bent on carrying out the profound designs he had made for the defence of that kingdom, and for resisting the attack he had clearly foreseen; his steadfast energies were directed to effect his purpose. He stipulated that he should have the command of a British army to be kept at a strength of thirty thousand men, and to be properly reinforced from the sea; this was, so to speak, to be his right arm in the field. But he had been placed at the head of all the Portuguese forces, under the honoured title of Marshal General; the men in office in Lisbon, now called the Regency, who though often divided, factious, and jealous of his power, nevertheless bowed to his superior will, were persuaded or compelled to put the whole military resources of the State in his hands; he had soon turned these to the very best advantage. The Portuguese army, which had already done good work, was largely increased and better organised, great additions were made to the Portuguese levies, and the whole male population was summoned to arms,

under the ancient feudal laws of the Portuguese monarchy. By these means Wellington's British force would have the support of a regular foreign army, and of a kind of militia as it may fitly be called ; both were probably not less than one hundred thousand strong; and there were, besides, large masses that could do much service. This combination of military arrays was to form, as it were, the human rampart which was to defend Portugal, and to offer the resistance which man could make to the enemy.

The forces of nature, however, as well as those of man, were to be employed in the accomplishment of the British General's design. Napoleon's masterly offensive strategy largely depended on the facilities given by good roads, and on the products of agriculture on the lines of march ; these enabled his armies to move rapidly, and to find the means of subsistence in the lands they traversed. His combinations had in a great measure failed when these conditions of success were absent; this had been conspicuously seen in his winter campaign in Poland, and already in some of the French operations in Spain. The circumstance did not escape the penetrating eye of Wellington ; he was alive to its significance for the defence of Portugal. He obtained from the Government at Lisbon a reluctant consent that the population should break up the main roads, should destroy the crops and harvests ; should lay the country waste along the whole front of the coming invasion ; this devastation, even if imperfectly carried out, would greatly embarrass and retard the enemy. But this was not the only natural obstacle

which was to be thrown across the advance of the hostile army; there was an obstacle which perhaps would be made impassable, if aided by the resources of the military art. Armed lines had become all but obsolete in war; but they had repeatedly proved of supreme importance; the lines of Villars, whatever has been said, saved France in 1710–1711; the features of the region beyond Lisbon could make these defences play a most remarkable part. Two ranges of heights rose between the Tagus and the sea, twenty-nine and twenty-four miles in length, and considerably north of the Portuguese capital; they formed a barrier to the approach of the enemy; they enclosed a vast intervening space which could be held by a defending force, in fact, to be compared to a huge entrenched camp. These eminences were occupied by the British chief along their whole extent, and fortified with admirable skill and care; low uplands were scarped down and made precipitous; valleys were inundated and turned into inaccessible swamps; points of vantage were chosen for the commanding fire of artillery; hills, villages, streams,—in a word, every part of the ground,—were made to contribute to the great projected work. In this way two formidable defensive lines, each supporting the other, and of prodigious strength, were formed along the ranges in front of Lisbon; they were protected by about a hundred and fifty redoubts, and armed by nearly seven hundred cannon; they were to be held by a powerful army, and in constructing them care had been taken that the army should possess the means of a counter-attack, and should not be

confined to a mere passive resistance. But Wellington's preparations did not stop here; foreseeing that conceivably the lines could be forced, he formed a third line, behind the first two, on the verge of the sea near Lisbon, of narrow breadth, but well-nigh impregnable; this would cover his army, if compelled to embark, and would make its retreat to its shipping secure. Tens of thousands of men were employed in making these gigantic works, rightly described as "a stupendous citadel, wherein to deposit the independence of the whole Peninsula"; and it is a most astonishing fact that these vast creations were planned and completed with such secrecy—this was a masterpiece of Wellington's art—that their very existence was unknown in Europe and even in England.

The lines of Torres Vedras, the name they bear in history, and Wellington's other arrangements for the defence of Portugal, in conception and execution were one of the most splendid specimens of the military art, in the great war between France and Europe. They were illustrations, on the very grandest scale, of sagacity, of forethought, of the adaptation of means to ends, in resisting the gigantic power of Napoleon; and they were the first permanent check in his career of conquest. And it adds to our admiration of this magnificent design that it was carried out in spite of misgivings in England, in spite of fears openly avowed by the British Government; in spite of alarm and scepticism in Wellington's camp. A Tory Ministry had retained office and the hopes of the Opposition had vanished;

but with the single exception of Lord Wellesley, the successor of Canning as Foreign Minister, the Cabinet of Percival had little faith in the possibility of a successful defence of Portugal; and this was the opinion of most of the distinguished officers on the spot. From this point of view the attitude of the British commander was an exhibition of constancy, of resolution, of moral power, to which hardly a parallel can be found in war; he stood as it were, on a rock in Portugal, defying all that Napoleon could do against him, his countrymen and his lieutenants filled with forebodings, depending on himself, and himself alone. Meanwhile his great adversary had his preparations made for reinvading Portugal, and for what, he was convinced, would prove an easy conquest. Had Napoleon had the slightest idea that the Portuguese auxiliaries now formed a real army, and that the lines of Torres Vedras were practically not to be assailed with success in front, he would doubtless have drawn together the mass of his forces in Spain, and moved them in overwhelming numbers upon Portugal; and had he entered that kingdom from the south, as well as from the north, the lines might perhaps have been turned, and the defences of Wellington made to fall. Such a combination would not have been difficult, had not an army been almost thrown away in false operations in Andalusia; but even now it was not impossible, had the Emperor thought the occasion had come. But Napoleon persisted in a belief that a small British army, of which, too, he much underrated the strength, was the only enemy to be found

MARSHAL SOULT.
(After the painting by Rouillard.)

in Portugal; he thought the Portuguese levies beneath contempt; above all, he remained in complete ignorance of the formidable obstacle laid in his path, should a French army try to make a direct march on Lisbon. It will always be a mystery that this consummate master of war, who had spies and partisans in every part of Europe, was absolutely uninformed as to the most essential fact, when he formed his plans in 1810 for a descent on Portugal.[1]

The preparations of Napoleon were, nevertheless, imposing, even if really insufficient for the intended enterprise. Armies, probably 120,000 strong, had been concentrated in Leon and Castile, to carry the war across the Portuguese frontier; the first line was composed of some 650,00 men, largely veterans of the best quality; the second was not much inferior in numbers and was, if necessary, to reinforce the first, and to guard the long line of communications with France, always infested by the active Spanish guerrillas. These collective arrays had been placed under the command of Massena, confessedly the ablest of the Imperial marshals; he had been directed, in the first instance, to take Ciudad Rodrigo, and Almeida, frontier fortresses on the northern verge of Portugal,—Ciudad, indeed, is just within Spain,—and then gathering together his foremost line, the corps of Ney, of Junot, of Reynier—this last moving from the valley of the Tagus, to reach Wellington, to overthrow him, and to march straight on Lisbon. A word here may be said on

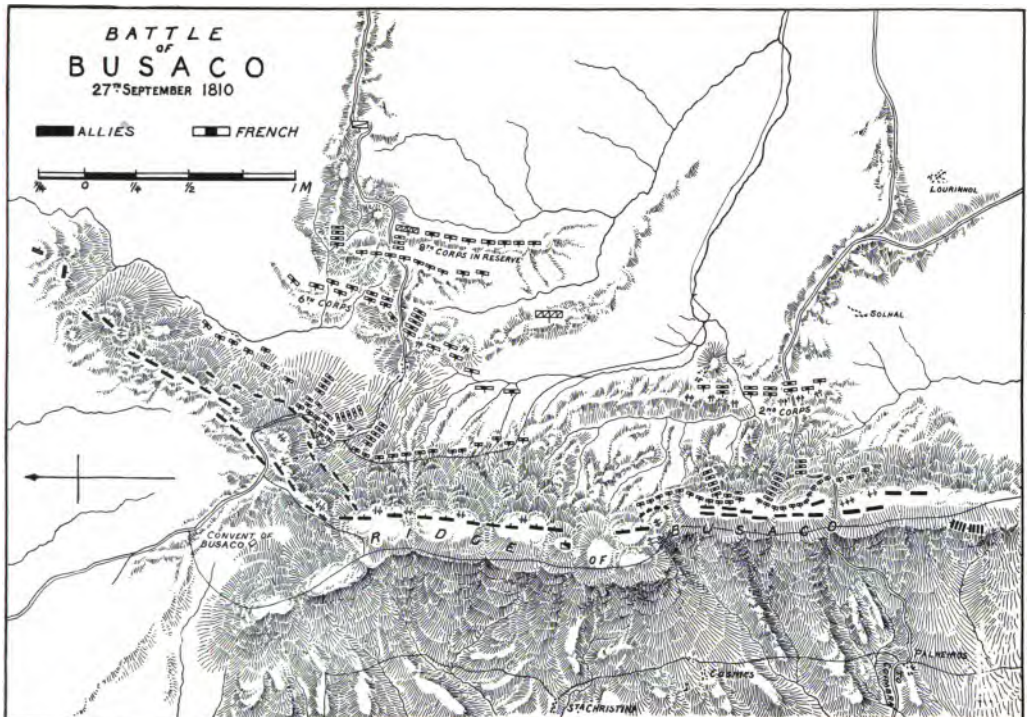
[1] The *Correspondence* of Napoleon at this time shows that he did not give the affairs of the Peninsula the attention they required.

the renowned French chief who had been entrusted with a mission he could not fulfil, and of which, strange to say, he had had grave misgivings. Massena was inferior, perhaps, as a strategist to Soult, inferior certainly as a tactician to Ney; he was not a master of the great combinations of war; he was licentious, rapacious, not liked by his troops; but he was capable of splendid efforts in the field, as his great victory of Zurich proves; his tenacity and energy deserve the highest praise, as was seen in his heroic defence of Genoa; we may accept Wellington's decisive judgment, that he was the best of all his Imperial opponents. The Marshal assumed his command in June; Ciudad Rodrigo had fallen on the 11th of July, after a siege on which it is unnecessary to dwell; Almeida surrendered, in the last days of August, in a great measure from the effects of an accident. Meanwhile, Wellington, who for some time, had concentrated the main part of his army in the valley of the Mondego, around Guarda, had, when made aware of the operations of the French, advanced cautiously beyond Celorico, not far from Almeida, in order to observe his antagonists' movements; but he properly refused to accept a trial of strength, to which Massena endeavoured to lure him, by feints, demonstrations, and an apparently careless attitude. This conduct was marked by his characteristic wisdom; he had not more than 24,000 men in hand, his best lieutenant, Hill, being still far away, another lieutenant, Leith, being many leagues distant; a lost battle in his position would have been his ruin, and a lost battle would have

been well-nigh a certainty. Disregarding, therefore, the taunts of his enemy and angry recriminations from Spanish and Portuguese allies, nay, even murmuring voices in his own camp, the British General allowed Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida to fall, without making an attempt at relief; in this course he was unquestionably right. Rash movements, indeed, of a brilliant lieutenant, Crawford, which nearly led to a grave reverse, proved that Wellington's judgment was, as usual, correct.

After the fall of Almeida, Massena made a rather long halt; his army had not begun its advance until the 16th of September. This has been charged to the Marshal as a grave error; it certainly gave Wellington what he needed, time; but Reynier was late in joining the main army; the French were already straitened for supplies. Massena's first object was to gain Coimbra, a large town which he may have wished to make a secondary base, and, if possible, to bring Wellington to bay. After making a series of dextrous feints, he marched, not down the valley of the Mondego, a comparatively fertile and prosperous tract, but just north of the river, through a barren and difficult country. This appears distinctly to have been an error; but the Marshal relied on Portuguese nobles in his camp, who had traitorously taken the side of the French; he knew nothing of the region he was passing through; he took, too, the nearest route to Coimbra. His soldiers, however, had begun to murmur, and Ney and Junot already were complaining of their chief; a train of his artillery had been nearly surprised and cut off; he had

hostile bands on his flank and rear; he did not reach Viseu until the 23rd of September, a place three or four marches at least from Coimbra. Wellington had fallen back through the valley of the Mondego, watching his enemy, but not molested by him; but he had summoned Hill and Leith to come into line. These lieutenants were even now at hand; he could dispose of not far from fifty thousand men. The British commander resolved to offer battle to his adversary in a strong position. This undoubtedly was running considerable risk, but military reasons did not determine his purpose. He was condemned by the men in power at Lisbon for what they deemed an ignominious retreat, as he had been condemned for leaving Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida to their fate. His own officers and soldiers who were in ignorance of the lines, and thought that all before them was a long march to the sea, were vexed that they had not measured themselves with the enemy; and though Massena's advance had been slow, the population had only partially wasted the country, and the Marshal had all the moral advantage of a bold offensive. Under these conditions Wellington crossed the Mondego, and standing between Viseu and Coimbra drew up his army along the ridge of Busaco, a kind of spur of the Sierra Alcoba, itself an offshoot of the great Sierra Caramula. The position of the British General was admirably chosen for the defensive battle he had decided to fight. The ridge afforded a formidable obstacle to the onset of the French, for they could only attack from a deep valley below, and they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would have to ascend very difficult heights. Its crest afforded space for the first British line, but screened the reserves which were arrayed behind. It made Massena's powerful cavalry completely useless, for they could not act on ground of the kind, and it greatly impeded the effective fire of the French artillery. The front of the position extended about five miles; it was to be occupied by nearly forty thousand men; it was probably not to be stormed by a direct attack. But it might have been turned on the left by a pass of the name of Boyalva, and this had been left well-nigh unguarded, a mistake which might have cost Wellington dear.

The advance guard of the French had reached the approaches to Busaco on the 25th of September; the corps of Ney and Reynier were close to the ridge on the 26th; they numbered more than thirty-five thousand men, for the most part veterans of the Imperial army. At this moment Leith and Hill were nearly half a march distant; Wellington had not more than twenty-five thousand men in hand; his position had not been completely occupied. Ney and Reynier were eager to fall on at once, but Massena was at Montagoa in the rear; very probably he had much to attend to, but there is reason to believe that he wasted time on the object of a discreditable amour. The Marshal, bringing with him the corps of Junot, did not join his lieutenants until the afternoon. The attack was postponed to the next day. Ney and Reynier, it is said, were now opposed to the attempt.

Meanwhile Leith and Hill had come into line with

their chief; the position was held by the mass of his forces; his arrangements had been perfected for the impending conflict. It had been decided, in the enemy's camp, that the attack was to be conducted by Ney and Reynier, the corps of Junot being kept in reserve; it was to be made by their troops at the same time; but it was not so made, and this was a capital mistake. At daybreak on the 27th, Ney being still motionless, the columns of Reynier, throwing out their cloud of skirmishers, advanced against Wellington's right and right centre; they had soon emerged from the valley below; they scaled the difficult height before them with exulting cheers, and though but little supported by the fire of their guns, they had reached the summit in less than half an hour, "with astonishing power and resolution overthrowing everything that opposed their progress." The division of Picton and the Portuguese auxiliaries were driven back; this part of the position had been nearly won, spite of a stern and fierce resistance; it might perhaps have been won had the assailants had a reserve at hand. But if Wellington's line had been broken at one point, and his retreat on Coimbra had been threatened, his troops would not confess defeat; the division of Leith restored the battle, plying the enemy with a murderous fire, and gradually forcing him from the crest of the height; Hill, coming up from the extreme right, made victory secure. Meanwhile Ney, after a delay of some hours, had begun his attack against Wellington's left. This was more skilfully directed than that of Reynier, but the ground was

more difficult, and it met the same fate. One of the Marshal's divisions, that of Loison, ascended the height before it, and nearly attained the top; the men, who had retained their formation, though hardly pressed, made an effort to fall on the enemy in their front; but as usual, the column was overcome by the line; "the head was violently overturned and driven upon the rear; both flanks were lapped over by the English wings, and three terrible discharges at five yards' distance completed the rout." The second of Ney's divisions—the third was held in reserve—endeavoured to turn the right of Crawford, to whom the honour of Loison's defeat was due; but it was kept completely in check, and it fell back, beaten.

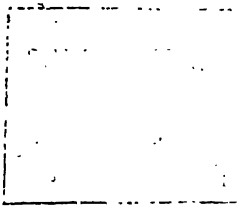
In this hard-fought engagement the French army was weakened by at least 4500 men, for the most part soldiers of the first quality,—many of the regiments had seen Jena and Austerlitz; it had, in fact, suffered a terrible reverse. Massena had not conducted the battle well; his troops gave proof of heroic valour, but they were not sustained by a reserve at any point; their three arms could not act together; the position ought not to have been assailed in front. And the blame the Marshal deserved was increased by this; before he made an ill-conceived attack, he had been made aware that his enemy's left could be turned by the pass of Boyalva; but it has been said that he yielded to the first counsels of Ney and Reynier, with whom he was already at odds, through fear that the Emperor would be informed that an opportunity of success had been missed. The losses of Wellington were not 1500 men, his

tactical dispositions had been as good as possible; if his right centre was for a moment in peril, he gained a real victory along his whole line; what was more important, the moral power of his army, which had been impaired, was restored; the Portuguese auxiliaries inspired daily increasing confidence.

The defeat of Busaco had been such a weighty stroke that Massena's lieutenants were for an immediate retreat; this, too, was the judgment of the British chief; he had written that the invaders ought not to have gone farther, unless they could be largely reinforced from Spain.[1] But tenacity was one of Massena's distinctive qualities: he had been positively ordered to proceed to Lisbon, and he had no notion of what he would have to encounter; he is hardly to be censured for continuing his onward march. The Marshal now did what he ought to have done before: leaving the corps of Junot to cover the movement, and abandoning hundreds of his wounded men, he made, on the evening after the battle, for the pass of Boyalva; he found no hostile force in the defile; the excuse that a detachment of Portuguese had been employed to guard it and was not on the spot for some unexplained reason, appears to be of little or no value. Within a few hours the whole French army had emerged from the pass; but this was a flank march in the presence of a victorious enemy, at a distance of only eight or ten miles; Wellington has been condemned for not seizing an advantage that might have had immense results; in this, one of his few shortcomings in a memorable campaign, we perhaps may

[1] *Selection*, pp. 399, 400. Wellington's language is emphatic.

ANDRE MASSENA, DUKE DE RIVOLI.
(After the painting by Maurice)



see a defect in war characteristic of him, he very seldom made the most of success. The left of the British General had now been turned, but he crossed the Mondego safely, and made good his retreat; his adversary made no attempt to molest him. Massena had entered Coimbra by the 1st of October; he halted on the spot for three days—a delay for which he can hardly be blamed—to form a depot and to restore his army; leaving only a small detachment and his wounded behind, he boldly advanced with the mass of his forces. His pursuit, however, was feeble and slow; the country on his line of march had been harried and wasted; Wellington was chiefly harassed by the crowds of refugees from Coimbra who followed his columns.

From the 8th to the 10th of October, the allied army had almost made its way within the celebrated lines. Hill lay along the heights of Alhandra to the right; Crawford held the centre between Aruda and Sobral; Leith and Picton stood on the left beyond Torres Vedras toward the sea; the first line of defence was fully occupied; the second was guarded by a sufficient reserve. After a slight brush with the British General's rearguard, Massena had attained the lines by the 11th; he had heard a few days before that some defensive works had been thrown up; but he had not the slightest conception of the stupendous barrier which now rose before him, and was defended by the men who won Busaco. The veteran, however, would not flinch; he searched the position from right to left, examining two or three of the most vulnerable points; it has been said that he

contemplated for a moment an attack pressed home. But such an effort, whatever French critics have urged, could only have led to a crushing defeat; the army of Wellington was daily increasing by additions of Spanish and Portuguese troops; the second line was even more formidable than the first; it may safely be asserted that the twofold mighty obstacle could not have been overcome by an attack in front even though made by one hundred thousand men; it could only have been turned by a movement from the other bank of the Tagus. In this position of affairs Massena rightly gave up any idea of a direct assault on the lines; he adopted a course not justified by the event, perhaps not strategically wise, but characteristic of the man, and from his point of view not without reason. Imposing silence on his discontented lieutenants, who insisted that a retreat had become a necessity, he resolved to take a position before the lines from which he could hold Wellington in check, perhaps induce the British General to fight, and on which he could at once menace Lisbon, carry out as well as he could his master's orders, and, as might be expected, could obtain the large reinforcements from Spain, even from France, he had right to look for. Drawing off, therefore, skilfully from the front of his enemy, he established his army around Santarem and the adjoining country, a tract only a few miles distant from the lines, comparatively fertile and not ravaged, affording points for a defensive battle, and commanding the routes that extend to Coimbra. At the same time he made preparations to bridge the Tagus, and its affluent the Zezère, in the hope that assistance

might reach him from the South, and he sent that distinguished officer, Foy, to inform Napoleon of the events that had happened, and to demand the reinforcements required if he was to fulfil his task. The arrangement was a masterly one if Massena's project could be accomplished.

Napoleon has severely condemned the conduct of his lieutenant in thus standing before the lines. This view was strengthened by an unlucky accident: Coimbra had been seized by a levy of Portuguese; Massena's detachment and his wounded had been captured or slain; the French army had lost a depot and fully 4000 men. The Emperor has insisted that the Marshal, after Busaco, ought to have occupied Coimbra in force; to have taken possession of the country around; to have extended his right wing as far as Oporto; and to have awaited the arrival of reinforcements from Andalusia and the south.[1] Wellington, it is unnecessary to say, thought Massena completely in the wrong: as he ought to have fallen back from Busaco, he ought the more certainly to fall back now; this was "the measure which it was the most expedient for the French to adopt."[2] Nevertheless, despite these weighty opinions, much is to be said for what Massena did; he kept his adversary confined within a nook of Portugal; the military power of France in the Peninsula was immense; it was practicable, at least from his point of view, to send him large aid from Andalusia and the Castiles; in that case the lines might have been turned from the eastern bank of the Tagus, and Lisbon might

[1] Nap. *Corr.*, pp. 31–362.

[2] *Selection*, p. 344.

have been reduced to submission; it hardly lay in Napoleon's mouth to censure operations which really conformed to his commands. Wellington, after Massena's movement on Santarem, was at the head of 60,000 or 70,000 men, to a considerable extent very good soldiers; the French army was probably not more than 50,000 strong, and was suffering from all kinds of privations; the British General has been sharply criticised for not falling on his adversary under these conditions. We may, perhaps, see here his characteristic caution and his occasional neglect to appeal to Fortune; but his seeming inaction was probably in all respects justified. Massena's army, if weakened, was still powerful, and, what is more important, had not lost heart; it would have been very formidable, had it been attacked in one of the excellent positions it might have taken; in the event of a defeat of the British commander, "failure," in his own words, "would be the loss of the whole cause."[1] It should be added that Wellington probably believed that Massena's troops could not long find the means of subsistence in the country they held, and would soon be compelled to make a disastrous retreat; he thus took a position not far from Santarem, hoping to assail his enemy when success would be certain. This expectation, however, was not fulfilled; the hostile armies remained watching each other for months; this was a striking instance of the resolution of the veteran Marshal, and also of the extraordinary skill with which an army of Napoleon could organise rapine

[1] *Selection*, p. 413.

and exist on scanty resources found on the spot. Meanwhile Massena threw a bridge across the Zezère, and hoped to be able to bridge the Tagus, ever looking forward to the assistance of his Imperial master.

During these events Foy had safely arrived in Paris; had informed Napoleon of the position of affairs; and had urged the necessity of reinforcing Massena in strength, with an army possibly as large as that which had invaded Portugal, and operating on both banks of the Tagus. He found the Emperor angry with his great lieutenant, who, he said, had made a series of mistakes, and deceived by the illusions to which he yet clung; the Portuguese levies were completely worthless; Wellington had not more than twenty-five thousand good troops; the lines might have been stormed by a vigorous effort. Nevertheless, seeing that Massena was in a difficult plight, he gave directions that supports should be sent to the Marshal from Leon, the Castiles, and Andalusia; the war must be brought to an end by the defeat of Wellington and the occupation of the Portuguese capital. Orders were given that D'Erlon should advance from the north, and join hands with the army before the lines; that Dorsenne should co-operate with the same purpose; that Joseph should send divisions from Madrid; above all, that Soult should push forward from Andalusia and come into line with Massena on the southern bank of the Tagus. By these means eighty thousand, even one hundred thousand men might be assembled to force and turn the defences of Wellington; the Emperor still believed that

success was certain. In principle these directions were well conceived; but the great warrior, still ignorant of the real facts, had miscalculated his military resources in Spain and was once more conducting war from a distance. It was scarcely possible to array such a mass of forces to assail the lines, even had Napoleon taken the supreme command; the communications with the North were in continual danger; the army of Joseph was held in check at Madrid; the siege of Cadiz paralysed Victor and was keeping the besiegers upon the spot; Soult, though disposing of a still powerful force, was harassed in Andalusia by the guerrillas and by the wrecks of the beaten Spanish armies. Napoleon in truth had missed an occasion which he might have seized in the first months of 1810, and besides he had turned his attention from the Peninsula. His relations with the Czar had become unfriendly; he had annexed the Duchy of Oldenburg, a state of one of the Czar's kinsmen; he was impoverishing Russia by the Continental System; he had refused to declare that Poland should not be restored; his ally was jealous of his marriage with Marie Louise. In these circumstances, the Imperial orders were ill obeyed; Dorsenne never approached the Tagus; D'Erlon only reached Massena with some ten thousand men; Soult, moving from Andalusia with perhaps twenty thousand, was delayed for weeks in laying siege to Badajoz, and remained far away from the decisive point, the Tagus. For this conduct the Marshal has been severely blamed, but it is difficult to say that he made a mistake: the enterprise would have been very

dangerous, and Massena and Soult, even if united, would not have compelled Wellington to abandon the lines.

It had become manifest, by the first days of March, 1811, that Massena could no longer maintain his position. His army was not more than fifty thousand strong, even with the reinforcements that had been brought by D'Erlon; it was isolated in a hostile country, which had been ravaged and turned into a waste; it had only supplies for a few days; the prospect of obtaining further support had vanished. The sound of artillery on the side of Badajoz had been heard, but it had ceased, or at least was at a great distance; Massena had not been able to bridge the Tagus, a necessity if he was to be joined by Soult. The veteran made up his mind with pain to retreat; in truth, no other conceivable course was open. The retrograde movement, if marked by more than one mistake, was conducted, on the whole, with admirable skill; but the French and the Portuguese had become deadly foes; it was disgraced by reckless barbarities and shameful excesses.[1] On the 4th of March Massena drew off his sick and wounded men; he contrived to screen this operation from the British chief; on the 5th and 6th his army was in full march by the main roads that led to Coimbra. Massena had thus gained an advantage; Wellington cautiously followed the retiring columns; Ney fought a brilliant engagement at Redinha of the same character as that of Rolica, in which the manœuvring power of the French was very apparent. Massena

[1] *Selection*, p. 449.

resolved if possible to prolong the contest, and, eager to resume an offensive attitude, sought to cross the Mondego and to hold Coimbra; from that place he would be in a region which had not suffered much; he still hoped that his master would reinforce his army. But the main bridge on the Mondego had been broken down; Ney had not defended the pass of Condeixa, which covered the approaches to Coimbra; the French army was compelled to march to the frontier by the southern branch of the Mondego through a difficult country. A series of partial combats took place, to the advantage generally of the allied army; the French suffered a real defeat at Sabugal, not far from the borders of Spain; in the last days of March Massena had crossed the Portuguese frontier; his army was not more than forty thousand strong; it was a shattered and disorganised wreck. Yet the Marshal would not forego his purpose; he insisted, when his men had had time to recruit their strength, on making an effort to descend on Coria, and co-operating with Soult to advance to the Tagus, and to renew the campaign under better auspices. But his lieutenants had been quarrelling for months with him; Ney, notably, refused to obey his orders; he instantly deprived the Marshal of his command.

Massena, after his calamitous retreat, spread his army in cantonments around Salamanca; the movement on Coria, had to be given up; it is impossible to suppose that it could have been successful. Meanwhile Wellington had invested Almeida, and, believing that he could not be attacked for a time, had gone in person into Estremadura, where his

presence on the spot would no doubt be of much advantage. Events in Spain had taken an unfortunate turn for the French, while Massena was painfully making his way out of Portugal. Soult had taken Badajoz after a protracted siege, and other places of little value; but Wellington had sent Beresford and Hill, with a considerable force, to retake the fortress. The Marshal was being involved in a sea of troubles. The siege of Cadiz had become a great operation of war; Victor still persisted in clinging to the spot; he had had enormous cannon made for bombarding the city; he had placed a flotilla on the lagoons; but the resistance he encountered defied his efforts. Cadiz, rising from a peninsula, enclosed by the sea, was exceedingly difficult to attack from the land; it had the support of a British squadron, and of an army weekly increasing in strength; in fact, Victor was menaced in his own camp, and had become less a besieger than a besieged. A mixed British and Spanish force had been told off to fall on his lines, but the Marshal had advanced to give it battle; he had been defeated with heavy loss at Barrossa, but he had averted a disaster that might have been fatal. Soult, in supreme command in Andalusia, found the affairs in that kingdom in a deplorable state; the conquerors had nearly been imprisoned within their own conquest. Murat had failed to make a descent on Sicily; a British detachment had been sent to take part in the defence of Cadiz; Murcia was stirring with a fast-spreading revolt; the French armies in Andalusia, greatly reduced in numbers, were beset by guerrillas on

every side, and by the remains of the Spanish armies; they held only the wasted tracts that they occupied, and were disseminated over an immense region. Such had been the results of an invasion utterly ill conceived; a fine army of eighty thousand men, which, if rightly directed, might have done great things, had been nearly reduced to impotence, and was now probably not sixty thousand strong.[1] Soult had only a small garrison to throw into Badajoz; it seemed that the fortress would erelong fall; it was this that had brought Wellington near the scene of events.

The army of Massena had, meanwhile, been reorganised more rapidly than could have been supposed, and had been made again an efficient instrument of war. Napoleon, however, was now bent on conducting a mighty crusade of the West against the East, and on beginning the enterprise which was to lead to the retreat from Moscow. The Czar had resented the annexation of the domain of a kinsman, had refused to carry out to extremes the Continental System, and was making slight preparations for war. Napoleon was incensed at what he deemed a challenge, and was making ready for a campaign far beyond the Niemen. Bodies of troops were being slowly moved from Italy and across Germany, every

[1] Wellington has clearly pointed out the mistake made by Napoleon in sanctioning the invasion of Andalusia: "It was obvious that the French were in error when they entered Andalusia. They should have begun by turning their great force against the English in Portugal, holding in check the Spanish force in Andalusia."—*Selection*, p. 434.

precaution being taken to assure secrecy; the French armies in Spain were being weakened by degrees; the reinforcements sent to Massena were small; they consisted of only a few thousand men added to D'Erlon's division, and of a detachment of the Imperial Guard under Bessières, a good cavalry officer, but in no sense a general. Massena had soon collected about 50,000 men, but Bessières was a jealous and unsympathetic colleague; Loison, who had been given the command of Ney, was an unwilling lieutenant, disliked by his soldiers; Junot and Reynier had never ceased to have disputes with their veteran chief. The Marshal, however, when made aware that Wellington was many leagues distant, resolved to advance to the relief of Almeida, and if possible to fight a great battle, which might retrieve a reputation somewhat impaired, and recall victory once more to the Imperial standards. He had reached Ciudad Rodrigo in the last days of April, 1811, and was soon on the way to Almeida, at the head of some 40,000 good troops, of whom 5000 were very fine cavalry; he found the allies in a position before Almeida, which was still invested and seemed on the point of falling. Wellington had only resumed his command on the 28th; it is not certain whether the dispositions made for his army were arranged by himself or by a subordinate, but they did not give proof of his remarkable tactical skill. His front was covered by the stream of the Dos Casas, by the village of Fuentes d'Onoro, and by a large ravine, but the position could be turned on the right, where the ravine ended in marshy flats,

which were passable, however, even by cavalry. His army occupied a kind of tableland between the Dos Casas, and the Turones, a stream fordable indeed, but deep; Almeida and the river Coa were in his immediate rear. Should his right, therefore, be forced and the position lost, he ran the risk of a very grave defeat. He was much inferior in numbers to his opponent; he had some 32,000 men and only 1200 cavalry; these last in by no means good condition for battle.

Fuentes d'Onoro was attacked by a part of the French army on the 3rd of May. This seems to have been a distinct mistake; the attack, as at Busaco, was made in front; the position was for a time imperilled, but the allies ultimately beat back the enemy. Massena spent the 4th in carefully reconnoitring the ground; he soon perceived the weak point of his adversary's line, he resolved to turn Wellington's right by a powerful force and simultaneously to fall on the British General's front; had his dispositions been properly carried out he probably would have gained a victory, considering the superiority in numbers of the French army. Wellington made arrangements to meet an effort of this kind; but it can hardly be said that these were adequate; he extended his right along the marsh, which possibly he may have thought impassable, but he placed only a body of partisans on the spot, and at first but a single division of British infantry. The attack of the French, intended to have been made at daybreak, was delayed for some unknown reason; but in the early forenoon of the 5th of May a mass

of cavalry, sustained by the corps of Junot, was seen advancing across the flat, menacing Poco Vello and Nava d'Aver on the British right. The detachment of partisans was driven off the field, and the single British division was placed in extreme danger; it has been said that had Loison seconded Junot, as he might have done, the British right might not only have been turned, but overwhelmed. The arrival, however, of two British divisions, and of the small and feeble body of British horse, to a certain extent restored the battle; but the superiority of the enemy, especially of his cavalry, was great; Wellington had to make new dispositions for his defence. Withdrawing slowly his endangered right, he effected a change of front in retreat; and took another position on rising ground between the Dos Casas and the Turones, falling back a distance of more than two miles. This was a most difficult and delicate movement; the French horsemen showed astonishing boldness, and though their onset was checked by the retiring infantry, which halted when pressed, and formed squares, "in all the war there was not a more dangerous hour for England." Indeed had Bessières, at a crisis perhaps decisive, sent a few squadrons of the Imperial Guard to support Montbrun, the all but victorious chief of the attacking cavalry, the British General could hardly have averted a defeat; but this help was refused on a frivolous pretext; the retrograde movement was maintained in order; the new position was successfully won. The French now opened a heavy cannonade on the narrow front which had thus been

formed; this caused much loss, but was kept under by the opposing guns; the efforts of the French cavalry were made fruitless; the assailants were brought completely to a stand. Meanwhile the original front of Wellington along Fuentes d'Onoro had been attacked; but here, too, the attack was late; D'Erlon gave little proof of energy or resource. Reynier, on Massena's extreme right, remained almost motionless. It has been said that this remissness was caused by want of sufficient munitions, which Bessières might have supplied, but refused; it was at least as probably due in the main to the supineness and faults of Massena's lieutenants, suffering from the fatigues of the campaign, and discontented with their chief. The allied army remained master of the field, but Fuentes d'Onoro can hardly be called a British victory; it was a fierce encounter in which a reverse was for a time imminent. If we bear in mind the defects of the British chief's position, a defeat might have had grave results.[1]

Massena retreated after the battle, gnashing his teeth at his lieutenants and notably at Bessières, who seems to have been a very disloyal colleague. The surrender of Almeida now appeared certain;

[1] Wellington was one of the most truthful of men. His remarks on the battle deserve notice. "Lord Liverpool was quite right not to move thanks for the battle of Fuentes, though it was the most difficult I was ever concerned in, and against the greatest odds. We had very nearly three to one against us engaged; above four to one of cavalry, and moreover our cavalry had not a gallop in them, while some of that of the enemy was fresh and in excellent order. If Bony had been there we should have been beaten."—*Supp. Despatches*, pp. 7–176.

but the garrison escaped through a most skilful and brilliant feat of arms; the fortress was partially blown up and was not taken. Massena was erelong superseded by Napoleon, an unjust, nay, a cruel sentence; Marmont, a very inferior man, was placed in his stead. The veteran was never at the head of an army again; he was wanting to his master when the days of fatal disasters came; but history has not forgotten Zurich and Genoa. In the campaign in Portugal he made a few mistakes; his health was perhaps in some degree impaired, but he gave proof of his great qualities in war; his discomfiture was partly due to the misconduct of his colleagues, mainly to his having been committed to an enterprise in utter ignorance of the most important facts of the case, and with wholly inadequate forces. Mistakes, too, may be laid to Wellington's charge: he ought not to have neglected the pass of Boyalva; he may have been rather slow in pressing his enemy's retreat; it is difficult to suppose that his position at Fuentes d'Onoro was chosen by himself. But these are only spots on the sun; they disappear in the splendour of his designs for the defence of Portugal; in the construction of the invincible lines; in the admirable arrangement of a magnificent campaign. He seized the true decisive points on the theatre of the war; made Portugal a fortress fronted by impregnable works and garrisoned by a powerful army, which defied the efforts of the best of the Imperial marshals; he completely, above all secretly, carried out his purpose, in spite of misgiving at home and murmurs in his own camp; and, perceiving fully and

clearly the faults of his enemy, he never hesitated, but brought to a triumphant issue a defence which astounded soldiers and statesmen throughout the civilised world. A limit had now been placed on Napoleon's conquests; a French army never entered Portugal again; Spain was thenceforward to be the theatre of the Peninsular War. No impartial mind can doubt but that in this contest the British General eclipsed and defeated Napoleon: not that he was the equal in war of the modern Hannibal, but that he conducted his operations with admirable skill and resource on the spot while the Emperor, by directing them from an immense distance, made a whole series of palpable mistakes, which inevitably led to portentous failures; in fact seemed to be, in more than one instance, like the blind leading the blind. Wellington, too, owed something to the disputes of the French commanders; but this was not the main cause of what happened in the campaign of 1810–1811, decidedly the finest exhibition of his superiority in war.

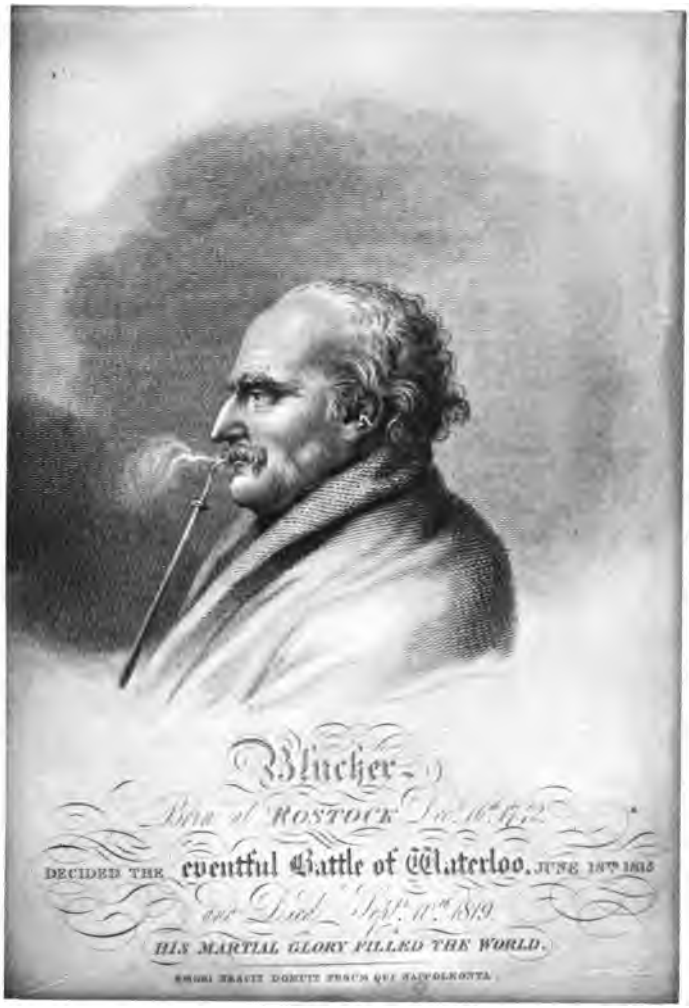
CHAPTER VI

CIUDAD RODRIGO, BADAJOZ, SALAMANCA, BURGOS

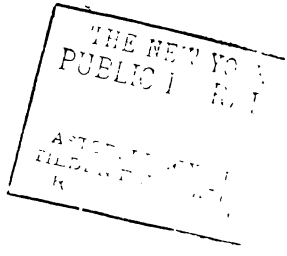
Wellington's defence of Portugal again stirs opinion on the Continent against Napoleon—Discontent in France, especially with the Peninsular War—Policy of Napoleon—Weakness of the position of the French in Spain—Joseph resigns his crown—Napoleon, intent on war with Russia, menaces the Continent, and tries to restore the situation in the Peninsula, to little purpose—The Empire apparently at its height in the eyes of most men—Distress in England—Confidence of Wellington—State of the armies in the Peninsula—First siege of Badajoz—Battle of Albuera—Second siege of Badajoz—It is raised—Junction of Soult and Marmont—Wellington on the Caya—The marshals separate—Wellington purposes to take Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz—His preparations—He is in danger at El Bodon—Progress of the French army in the East—Siege and fall of Tarragona—Suchet at Valencia—Napoleon directs a large part of his forces to the East—Arroyo Molinos—Wellington takes Ciudad Rodrigo—Reduction of the French armies in Spain—Third siege of Badajoz—The place taken after a desperate resistance—Wellington invades Spain—Operations of Marmont—Wellington outmanœuvred—Great victory of Wellington at Salamanca—Fine retreat of Clausel—Wellington occupies Madrid—He besieges Burgos and fails—Soult forced to evacuate Andalusia—Wellington retreats from Burgos—He is threatened by the united French armies, but makes good his way to Ciudad Rodrigo.

THE successful defence of Portugal in 1810–11 sent again a thrill through the submissive Continent. Massena had recoiled from the lines of Torres Vedras; had been compelled to make a disastrous retreat; had brought back to

Spain only the wreck of an army. The operations of Wellington in war began to be studied, as the operations of Napoleon had been studied before; the importance of wasting a country, and of a great material obstacle in checking French invasion and conquest, had been fully perceived. The overthrow of Massena and the means by which it had been effected encouraged the Czar to take a bolder attitude; he increased his preparations to resist his late ally, and moved part of his armies from the Danubian provinces; Russia could assuredly make as good a stand as Portugal. The Austrian Court, directed by Metternich and in some measure bound by the recent marriage alliance, remained openly on good terms with the French Emperor, though the Austrian aristocracy was, as always, hostile; but Germany was stirred again with a patriotic movement, unchecked by vassals of the Confederation of the Rhine, especially manifest in downtrodden Prussia. The regular army of that Power had, at Napoleon's bidding, been reduced to an insignificant force; but a man of genius, Scharnhorst, had continued to increase its strength fourfold by passing recruits through its ranks in rapid succession; it was now burning to avenge Jena; one of its chiefs, Blucher, though only a rude soldier, had, with insight quickened by hatred, seen, as Wellington with the eyes of wisdom had seen, that the stability of the French Empire—a defiance to European history—was not assured, and might not be permanent. Meantime, the excesses of the Continental System were provoking indignation, ever on the increase;



BLÜCHER.
(From an old engraving.)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this was much aggravated by devices of a fraudulent kind, employed to make it less onerous to France and to Napoleon's policy. The quarrel, too, with the Pope had been embittered; Pius VII. had excommunicated his Imperial tyrant, and had indirectly challenged his temporal power by refusing to institute French bishops; the Emperor had hastily convened an episcopal council, and this had even openly sympathised with the imprisoned Pontiff. And in France herself there were signs of weakness and discontent which the most despotic of Governments could not conceal or suppress. England, supreme at sea, had destroyed French maritime commerce; grass grew in the streets of Bordeaux and Marseilles; several industries of importance were in decay, and the Continental System had stimulated French production in some directions to such a dangerous extent that this had led to widespread bankruptcy and distress. France, too, was sick of war, and especially of the war with Spain, with its reverses and its devouring waste; a cry had gone forth that "our youth were being sent to the shambles"; at this very time fifty or sixty thousand conscripts had eluded the summons to the Imperial eagles, and were being hunted down, as malefactors, from Brittany to Provence. Napoleon had ceased to be the idol of a few years before; it was significant that the birth of the young King of Rome made little or no impression on the national mind.

Symptoms of decline that might ultimately lead to its fall were thus showing themselves in the colossal Empire, which was still dominant in three-fourths of

the Continent. These were now strikingly apparent on the theatre of events, where Napoleon had hoped to find an easy conquest. It was not only that a comparatively small army, directed by a chief whose powers had become manifest, had repeatedly defeated the Imperial legions and had made the Iberian Peninsula a kind of place of arms of the highest advantage to England in her European contest. It was not only that the resources of the French Empire were heavily taxed to keep up the war in Portugal and Spain: more than 500,000 invaders had crossed the Pyrenees; of these fully 150,000 had disappeared; nearly 400,000 were required to keep up the struggle, and yet the prospects of success seemed every year darkening. Nor was it only that the Portuguese levies had been gradually formed into a real army growing in numbers and becoming very efficient in the field; that the universal Spanish rising had proved impossible to put down, and was wasting away the hosts of the enemy; that the remains of the Spanish armies, still of little value in the field, were being reorganised in all parts of the country, and were becoming a force that could not be despised; that Spain had acquired a kind of regular government which, though presumptuous, revolutionary, often unwise, and notably jealous of England, its true support, nevertheless represented the united Spanish people. The usurping authority Napoleon had set up in Spain had lost any influence it might have acquired, and seemed at this juncture on the verge of extinction. The Emperor had promised to make Joseph a national sovereign, ruling

Spain in independence of France; but Spain had been treated as the mere spoil of conquest; her territory had been parcelled out among French marshals, who preyed on it to support their armies, or wasted it to maintain licence and rapine; her resources had been employed to pay for the war; it had openly been avowed that she was to be dismembered and to be deprived of her provinces north of the Ebro. The Government of Joseph had been completely set at naught; he vegetated at Madrid with an empty treasury, surrounded by a mock Court in distress, often affronted by Napoleon's lieutenants, in fact, a scarecrow of royalty, not a king; all this had exposed him to general and profound contempt, while his brother's arbitrary and iniquitous conduct in Spain, his despotism, his exactions, above all, his threat to annex a great part of the monarchy to France, had stimulated the national rising to the highest pitch, and had made all hopes of conciliation and peace vanish. Joseph declared his position had become impossible to endure; he went to Paris and gave up the uneasy crown of Spain about the time when Fuentes d'Onoro had been fought. The new dynasty which Napoleon had set up beyond the Pyrenees had effaced itself; the symbol of his power had suddenly disappeared, and this at the moment when his armies had suffered a terrible reverse; when his lieutenants in Spain were exasperated by defeat, and were more than ever divided by jealousy and mutual ill-will.[1]

[1] Long before this time Wellington had perceived the growing dissension between Napoleon and Joseph. He wrote thus in June,

Napoleon, still confident in his genius and his sword, had little or no remedy but military force to apply to this threatening position of affairs. He was so indignant with Alexander that he thought for a moment of invading Russia before the Czar's preparations had been made; but he soon abandoned this premature design; he spent the later months of 1811 and the months that followed in arranging for his attack on the Empire of the East, the difficulties of which he had completely fathomed. Nor did he neglect any means of assuring success; he dangled the Illyrian provinces before Austria as a possible reward in the contest at hand; he peremptorily warned Prussia that, should she prove false, she would be blotted out from the map of Europe; he insisted on the contingents of the Confederation of the Rhine being ready; he summoned a great army across the Alps from Naples and Italy. For the present he temporised with Pius VII., having wrung from him the chief concessions he wanted; and though he imprisoned two or three recalcitrant bishops, he did not pit the Empire against the Church, always more afraid of moral than of material power, as was manifest in several passages of his career. As for France, he employed expedients, but to no great purpose, to mitigate her commercial distress; but he

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1810: "I think there is something discordant in all the French arrangements in Spain. Joseph divides his kingdom into prefectures, while Napoleon parcels it out into governments; Joseph makes a great military expedition into the south of Spain and undertakes the siege of Cadiz, while Napoleon places all the troops and half the kingdom under the command of Massena."—*Selection*, 367.

would not in any sense relax the Continental System; and, reckless of the murmurs heard far and near, he left nothing undone to pursue his "refractory conscripts," and he pushed the conscription to its extreme limits; at this time there were one million men under the Imperial eagles, composed, however, of many races and tongues. At this juncture he once more devoted much attention to the Iberian Peninsula; he did not wish to leave a destructive conflict in his rear, while he was about to lead the armed hosts of the West beyond the Niemen. It appears certain that for some weeks he contemplated taking the field in person in Spain and Portugal; this can be gathered from parts of his correspondence; the rumour was so prevalent that Wellington strengthened the lines, and made ready again to defend Lisbon. But the Emperor gave up a half-formed purpose, which might have had momentous results, and, bent on his crusade against Russia, he treated the Peninsula as but a secondary object. He increased, however, at least for a time, the forces he had in Spain and on the Portuguese frontier; these were raised to nearly four hundred thousand men, but they were largely troops of not the best quality. As to the dispositions to be made of these vast arrays, the armies in Spain were to be kept to their strength, and the provinces they occupied were to be held; but Portugal was not to be invaded again; the fate of Massena had been a significant lesson. Napoleon, however, appears to have been convinced that the Peninsula could still be subdued when he had brought his enterprise in Russia to a triumphant

close; meanwhile he believed that, even in 1811, Suchet and Soult could crush all resistance in the South, and that Marmont and the army in the North had nothing to fear from Wellington. At the same time he persuaded Joseph to play the part of a puppet king again, and to return in idle state to Madrid; he replenished, to a certain extent, his treasury; he he gave him the nominal command of all the French armies in Spain. But he refused to say a word as to the threatened dismemberment, he did not really limit the power of his rapacious lieutenants; he could not put a stop to their animosities and ruinous discords. These half measures only filmed over the ulcerous part; they left affairs in Spain hardly improved or changed.

To ordinary observers, nevertheless, nay, to the great majority of soldiers and statesmen, the supremacy and the power of Napoleon seemed, at this juncture, as overwhelming as ever. He was master of the Continent, except in Spain and Portugal; war with Russia had not yet been declared; the belief was general that the Czar would not resist, or that resistance would end in another Friedland. It was assumed, too, as the event was to show, that Germany and Italy would bow to the will of their lord, and would march with his eagles beyond the Niemen; and how could a half barbarian Empire cope with the armed strength of three-fourths of the European world? England remained the only great Power at war with Napoleon; and though she was still omnipotent at sea, and had conducted a successful campaign in Portugal, it seemed in the highest de-

gree unlikely that she could permanently shake the structure of the French Empire. And England, at this time, had grave troubles of her own; she was being drawn into a quarrel with the United States; her internal condition had become menacing; millions of her poor population were suffering from distress, showing itself too often in riotous discontent; the pressure of taxation on all classes was intense. The glory of Torres Vedras no doubt had stirred the national mind: the Ministry maintained a bold attitude; the cavillings of the Opposition had ceased; the army in the Peninsula was being strengthened; things were very different from what they had been when a descent on Portugal was deemed a forlorn hope. But very few of the leading men of England believed that the Peninsular War could be as ruinous to Napoleon as it was to be; Wellington probably was the only real exception. His defence of Portugal had naturally increased his confidence; his profound calculations had been realised; he was now convinced that the war could be carried on with good hope in Spain, and that it might be destructive of what he described as "the fraudulent tyranny" which kept down the Continent. The fears, too, of his subordinates had become things of the past; his lieutenants and officers recognised the capacity of their chief; his army, though largely composed of Portuguese, had become a most formidable and efficient instrument of war. And yet the inequality of his forces appeared prodigious when compared to those which could be arrayed against him. English descents on the coast of Spain could, no doubt, assist him; he

expected that a British contingent from Sicily would come to his aid; the guerrillas held in check thousands of the best troops of France, and made their communications everywhere insecure; the Spanish armies were reappearing in the field; the moral, even the material, power of the Spanish rising was great. But probably, under existing conditions, he could not oppose more than one hundred and sixty thousand men, including even his Spanish allies in the field, to nearly four hundred thousand of those of the enemy: the seeming disproportion of strength was thus enormous: it would have appalled every other commander who had tried to cope with Napoleon.

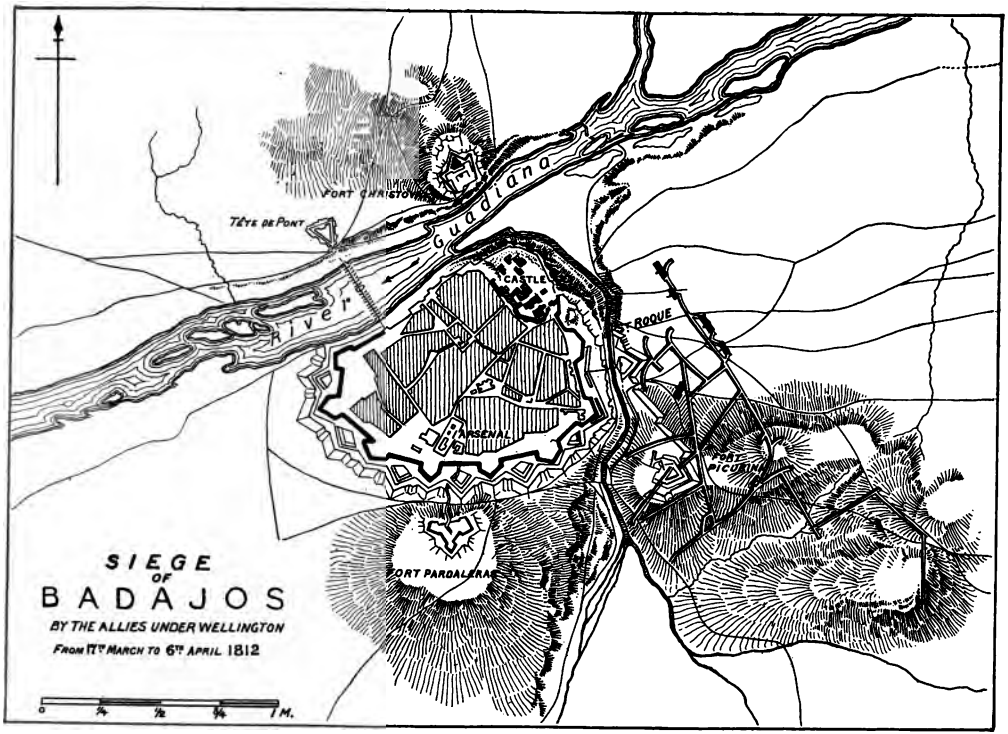
I may glance at the positions and the approximate strength of the belligerent armies at this conjuncture. Bessières, soon to be replaced by Dorsenne, was in command of the French army of the North; this was composed of 50,000 or 60,000 troops; and, ever beset by bands of guerrillas, was guarding the communications between France and Madrid, a task of difficulty, that usually kept it on this part of the theatre of the war. Marmont was at Salamanca reorganising Massena's army; he had probably 50,000 soldiers, on paper, and many of these were of excellent quality, but the army was still suffering from the effects of the campaign in Portugal. Joseph was the nominal chief of the Army of the Centre, as it was called; this was from 20,000 to 30,000 strong; it was spread around Madrid and in the valley of the upper Tagus. In the East, Suchet was in command in Aragon: he had been given the chief part of Mac-

donald's forces, which had been employed against the fierce Catalans; he had administered his province with justice and care—in fact, he was the least rapacious of the French generals: he had taken Lerida, Tortosa, and other strongholds; he had a fine army of perhaps 70,000 men, of whom some 50,000 could appear in the field; he had been directed to besiege and capture Tarragona, the greatest of the Catalonian fortresses, to advance southwards to subdue Valencia, and if possible to join hands with Soult. That Marshal was in Andalusia at the head of an army said to be 80,000 strong, but really hardly more than 60,000; part of these troops was employed in the siege of Cadiz, which every week was proving to be all but hopeless; the remaining parts were scattered throughout the province, keeping the population and the conquered cities down, or were in Estremadura observing Badajoz, the only trophy of the Campaign of 1810. The French armies were thus spread over the whole of Spain, everywhere assailed by the national rising, and here and there by the reviving Spanish armies; they were under chiefs who would seldom act cordially together; thousands of the soldiers were mere recruits, and as the campaign at hand was to prove, they had lost much of their wonted confidence, and had learnt what was the power of the British infantry. On the opposite side Wellington probably disposed of some 80,000 men along the Portuguese frontier; he had, too, a considerable reserve; he held a central position between divided and distant enemies, and he had a formidable and victorious army, moved to a man by

his single will. It is unnecessary to add that he derived enormous support from the guerrillas and the national rising, from the Spanish armies which, under Blake, Ballasteros, and other chiefs, were making their presence felt, especially in the South and the East, and from the descents of British squadrons on the coasts of Spain, and, as I have said, he hoped to see a British force from Sicily appear to give him aid.

Hill and Beresford had, we have seen, been detached before Fuentes d'Onoro to lay siege to Badajoz. Hill had the covering army a few marches distant: the siege fell to the share of Beresford, who expected the support of one of the Spanish armies. The attack, however, had hardly begun, when Soult marched from Seville to the relief of the fortress at the head of about 24,000 good troops: the Marshal had his eyes always fixed on his late conquest. Wellington, who, I have said, had left the main army for Estremadura, was not on the scene; Beresford raised the siege on the 12th and 13th of March, and advanced to Albuera, where he was joined by Blake and Castanos, with from 15,000 to 20,000 Spaniards, to offer battle to the enemy at hand. The allied army was perhaps 35,000 strong; but the British infantry did not exceed 7000 men; the Portuguese were not more than 8000; the French army was very superior in really effective strength. These operations led to the battle of Albuera, in itself not of supreme importance, but perhaps the most desperately con-

[1] The figures I have above given are, of course, largely conjectural; but I have taken pains to make them as accurate as possible.


Guadiana
River
TÊTE DE PONT
FORT CHRISTOVAL
CASTLE
ROQUE
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FORT PICURINA
FORT PARDALERAS
SIEGE
OF
BADAJOS
BY THE ALLIES UNDER WELLINGTON
FROM 17th MARCH TO 6th APRIL 1812
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advancing French: a great column was hurled down the height; the Marshal gave up the fiery trial.[1] It has been said, however, — and this was one of his shortcomings in war, — that had he boldly fallen on, on the following day, Beresford could not have avoided a defeat.

Villars fought Malplaquet to relieve Mons; Soult fought Albuera to relieve Badajoz. Both generals retreated after these battles; both, therefore, virtually confessed defeat, if in both instances victory was all but doubtful; indeed, Malplaquet was truly a Pyrrhic victory. The carnage at Albuera was prodigious, about one in four of the troops engaged, a proportion to which very few parallels can be found. Soult fell back a few marches on Llerena, seeking an opportunity to strike again; Wellington, having left Estremadura to fight Fuentes d'Onoro, returned to Badajoz in May and renewed the siege. The place was invested between the 25th and the 29th; the covering army was commanded by Hill; Wellington disposed of perhaps 43,000 men, but of these not 28,000 were British soldiers; the besieging force was some 10,000 strong. I shall afterwards briefly describe Badajoz, when it became the scene of

[1] Napier's description of this famous charge is well known. This was Wellington's brief account of the battle: "The Spanish troops, I understand, behaved admirably . . . but they were quite immovable; and this is the great cause of our losses. After they had lost their position, . . . the British troops were the next and they were brought up, and must always be brought up in these cases: and they suffered accordingly . . . we should have gained a complete victory if the Spaniards could have manœuvred, but unfortunately they cannot."—*Selection*, pp. 482–483.

one of the most terrible conflicts of which history has left a record; enough here to say that the fortress rose from the southern bank of the Guadiana; was surrounded by a wall, with its bastions, and by external works, and was defended by a garrison of some five thousand men, under Philippon, a most skilful and determined officer. The most vulnerable part of the place was the ancient castle, near the river, and on the north-eastern front; but this was protected by the fortified work of Christoval, which was held to be the principal point for the attack. Fire opened on the fortress on the 2nd of June, and was maintained for three or four days; but the siege guns of the assailants brought up from Elvas were old and bad, and without proper shot,—some of the guns were cast in the reign of Philip II.,—the trenching and other tools were of inferior quality. Two breaches, however, had been made in Christoval by the 6th, but the garrison had retrenched these; two daring assaults were successfully repulsed. Meantime a most formidable relieving force was being assembled to save the beleaguered fortress. Marmont had broken up from Salamanca, had crossed the Tagus, and was on the march to join hands with Soult; Soult, supported by D'Erlon, was on the way from Llerena; a great army would be before Badajoz in a few days. Wellington raised the siege on the 12th of June; the marshals had entered Badajoz on the 19th. Philippon and his brave garrison received the meed of praise they deserved.

The British General now took a strong defensive position on the Caya, a feeder of the Guadiana, about

midway between Badajoz and Elvas, and made ready to accept battle. Everything seemed to portend a great trial of strength; Wellington had hardly more than 42,000 men; Marmont and Soult disposed of more than 60,000. The chances certainly were on the side of the marshals; but, as had so often been the case before, the French commanders disagreed with each other; Marmont thoroughly disliked and distrusted Soult,[1] and, besides, the memory of a series of defeats hung heavily on the minds of the French soldiery. The hostile armies confronted each other for more than a fortnight; the marshals drew off without firing a shot; but it does not follow, as French writers have urged, that they must have gained a decisive victory. Marmont now fell back into the valley of the Tagus, spreading his army over a vast space and connecting it with Salamanca, his headquarters; but he repaired the bridge across the river at Almaraz, and fortified this with skill and care, in order to keep up his communications with Soult. On his side, Soult, leaving D'Erlon with a detachment not far from Badajoz, set off for Andalusia to maintain his hold on the provinces; he was occupied for some time with the Spanish armies, which caused him a great deal of trouble and loss; he even stretched a hand towards Suchet in the East. Wellington, therefore, was unmolested and free to act; he marched northwards with the mass of his forces, Hill being left in Estremadura to observe Marmont; his object was, if possible, to capture

[1] See Marmont, *Mémoires*, pp. 4, 46, 47.

Ciudad Rodrigo, taken by Massena the year before. The fortress, he had been informed, was without supplies; he was deceived, however, by a false report. He confined himself to a blockade of Ciudad; he placed his troops in cantonments in the adjoining lands between the Agueda and the Coa; they were suffering greatly from the fevers and the diseases of the tract around the Guadiana. Things apparently did not look well for the British chief; Fuentes and Albuera had cost him dear; the siege of Badajoz had been twice raised; the hostile armies in Spain were in great strength; the Spanish and Portuguese governments had been crossing him in many ways; murmurs against his "inaction" were even heard in England. Yet Wellington retained his steadfast confidence; he contemplated the situation with characteristic insight; he was convinced, from the position of affairs before him, that he would not only be able to defend Portugal, but could carry the war beyond the frontier.[1]

By this time it had become improbable in the

[1] Wellington wrote thus to Dumouriez in July, 1811, when his prospects did not appear bright: "Je crois que ni Buonaparte, ni le monde, n'ont compté sur les difficultés à subjuguer la Peninsule, étant opposé par une bonne armée en Portugal. It a fait des efforts gigantesques, dignes de sa réputation, et des forces dont il a la disposition; mais il n'en a pas fait assez encore; et je crois que l'ancien *dictum* de Henri Quatre que 'quand on fait la guerre in Espagne avec peu de monde on est battu, et avec beaucoup de monde, en meurt de faim,' se trouvera vérifié de nos jours; et que Buonaparte ne pourra jamais nourrir, même de la manière Française moderne, une armée assez grande pour faire la conquete des Royaumes de la Peninsule, si les alliés ont seulement une armée assez forte pour arrêter ses progrès."—*Selection*, p. 501.

extreme that Napoleon would appear in person in Spain; he was engrossed with his preparations for the war with Russia. The French armies in the Peninsula, though still maintained at their full strength, would therefore sooner or later be more or less diminished, they were disseminated, besides, over a vast space; for the present they were most powerful in the south and the east of Spain. In these circumstances Wellington believed that he might find an opportunity to pounce on Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, the keys of the Spanish frontier to the west; this would give him a favourable position to invade Leon and Castile, perhaps to strike the enemy's communications between Bayonne and Madrid. He had made arrangements to facilitate an attack on both fortresses; he had caused a good road to be constructed, which opened a way into Estremadura, and thus brought him within easy reach of Badajoz, but Ciudad Rodrigo was his immediate object; he was quietly preparing to make this siege. Taught probably by what had occurred at Badajoz, he resolved that his guns should be efficient; he directed a siege train, which had arrived from England, to be sent from Lisbon, as if it was meant for Cadiz; and then with admirable secrecy and skill he had had it landed at the mouth of the Douro and transported to Celorico, not far from Ciudad, where it remained concealed from the enemy until the proper moment had come. But in the meantime the British commander narrowly escaped a reverse which might have been most disastrous. His army, not more than thirty thousand

strong,—many of his troops were distant and smitten with disease,—was spread along the Agueda, on both its banks, its leading divisions near Ciudad Rodrigo, its rearward miles away, at a place called St. Payo; he had no expectation that he could be attacked in force. Dorsenne, however, in the north, and Marmont along the Tagus, had learnt that Ciudad was about to succumb to famine; they rapidly assembled some sixty thousand men, acting well together, unlike most of their colleagues; on the 23rd of September, 1811, they had reached the fortress and successfully introduced a great convoy of supplies. Marmont, in supreme command, did not think of fighting a battle, but he wished to ascertain the positions of the enemy's forces. On the 24th his troops, greatly superior in numbers, attacked a single division of Wellington, standing isolated on the heights of El Bodon. The attack was repulsed, but the position was turned and lost; Wellington drew his army together in retreat on Guinaldo; but he waited for hours for Crawford's division; fourteen thousand men were for a time opposed to enemies who might have fallen on with at least forty thousand! "Wellington, your star, too, is bright," Marmont bitterly exclaimed when he heard of the grand opportunity he had let slip; but the Marshal's operations had been tentative and weak.[1]

Wellington was taken by surprise in this instance, an accident that will sometimes happen in war; he

[1] For Marmont's lame and impotent apology see *Mémoires*, iv., 67–68.

had not reckoned on the speedy junction of Dorsenne and Marmont. Meanwhile the French arms had made remarkable progress in the theatre of the war, in Spain in the east. Suchet, leaving forces behind in Aragon and Catalonia to maintain a hold on the provinces he had so well governed, marched against Tarragona, as he had been ordered; he was before the fortress in the first days of May, 1811, with an army of about twenty-four thousand men. The place was one of very great importance; it was a point of refuge for the Catalan rising, an arsenal and a depot of supplies; it had the support of a British squadron and of a British flotilla, which could assist the garrison if attacked. Its natural and artificial strength was not doubtful; it was divided into a lower town and an upper town, each defended by a bastioned enceinte; it was unassailable on its seaward front, its northern and eastern points were covered by Olivo, a fortified outwork, its western by a deep stream, the Francoli; it contained an army of eighteen thousand Spaniards, always formidable when fighting behind walls. The siege was protracted for nearly two months, but French science and valour at last triumphed. Olivo was first taken after a stern resistance; trenches were then opened beyond the Francoli; the lower town was next successfully stormed; the upper was carried by one of the most desperate efforts that were made in the whole Peninsular War; the besieged were not far from equal to the besiegers in numbers. Tarragona was given up to pillage, as was the unhappy custom of those days. French writers, who have taken care to dwell on the

excesses of British troops in towns they had conquered, must excuse us if we remark that in this instance, too, barbarity and licentiousness were not less manifest. Suchet justly received the staff of a marshal for this brilliant exploit. After placing his army in cantonments during the heats of summer, he advanced in September into the lands of Valencia, which Napoleon had marked down long before for conquest. The Marshal, making his way along the coast-line, was stopped before the walls of the ancient Saguntum, famous for the stand it made against Hannibal. Blake appeared with a considerable relieving force; but he was completely defeated and the place fell. The way into Valencia was now open; Suchet crossed the Guadalaviar, and by the end of November had invested the capital of the kingdom defended by Blake and a strong garrison.

The Marshal had not more than twenty thousand men; this force was not sufficient to take the fortress. Napoleon, hundreds of miles away from the scene of events, saw in Valencia the decisive point to be occupied at the existing moment. He directed parts of the armies of the North and the Centre to advance and to reinforce Suchet; even Marmont was to despatch two divisions from the valley of the Tagus to support his colleague. These orders were obeyed more readily than was usually the case in Spain; Valencia was surrounded by forces which could not be withstood; the place fell in January, 1812, after a mere semblance of a siege; nearly twenty thousand Spaniards were made prisoners of war. This was a notable triumph for the invaders

of Spain; but the French armies had been moved from their positions to a considerable extent: Marmont's two divisions had overshot their mark, and had actually marched to Alicante, far south of Valencia. This dislocation of the French armies gave Wellington his opportunity to fall on Ciudad Rodrigo, though Napoleon's dispositions were correct in principle had they been carried out rapidly and with intelligence; possibly anticipating what the British chief might attempt, the Emperor had directed Marmont to move from the valley of the Tagus into that of the Douro, and thus to be nearer the threatened fortress. Wellington before this time had struck a weighty blow, of good omen for the operations at hand; Hill had annihilated one of D'Erlon's divisions at a place called Arroyo Molinos, in Estremadura; Girard, though a good soldier, had been suddenly taken by surprise. The British chief, having brought up his siege train to the spot, appeared before Ciudad Rodrigo on the 12th of January, 1812; he disposed of more than seventy thousand men; the garrison was not more than eighteen hundred, and was commanded by an inexperienced officer; there was no prospect of a relieving force; this want of anything like adequate means of defence appears to have been mainly the fault of Dorsenne, at the head of the Imperial army of the North. The siege that followed may be briefly passed over, but in the

[1] Napier will not admit that Napoleon was in error in sending so large a force to Suchet when before Valencia. Thiers and other French writers take an opposite view. I do not think that the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo can be largely attributed to this cause.

result it was of very great importance. Ciudad was an old fortress upon the Agueda, surrounded by the usual bastions and walls; but it was protected by two convents, which had been fortified, and by an outwork on rising ground called the Teson. The besiegers, who could spare almost any loss of men, had soon taken this work and stormed the convents; they easily made two breaches in the walls, which had been imperfectly repaired since Massena's siege; and though they encountered a brave resistance, the place was assaulted by overwhelming numbers, and fell after a defence of but ten days. The only point in the siege that requires attention is that the British engineers did not destroy the counterscarp, a mistake that was soon to cost Wellington dear. In fact, though the lines of Torres Vedras were a model of art, the scientific arms in the British service had been but little versed in the attack of strong places.[1]

The losses of the assailants at Ciudad were great, not less than nearly one thousand men; the brilliant and daring Crawford was among the fallen. Meanwhile Marmont, who had waited for his divisions in the east, was on his way from the valley of the Tagus to that of the Douro, but the fortress had surrendered before he reached Salamanca. The advance of the French Marshal had been slow; but had Ciudad Rodrigo possessed a sufficient garrison, it might have held out for twenty days, and received the support of a relieving army; the speedy fall of the place must be mainly ascribed to Dorsenne.

[1] Marlborough noticed this defect at the great siege of Lille in 1708.—Coxe, ii., p. 312.

One of the keys of the Spanish frontier had thus been taken. Wellington was properly rewarded with an English earldom, and was made a duke in the peerage of Spain.

A portentous change was now being made in the military power of the invaders of the Peninsula. The war with Alexander had become imminent. As Wellington had foreseen, Napoleon was compelled to make considerable drafts from his armies in Spain; they were erelong reduced by fully sixty thousand men; not more, probably, than two hundred thousand were actually present under arms to maintain the contest. The balance of force, therefore, which a few months before had seemed to preponderate so enormously against the British Chief—and yet was not so great as it appeared to be, if we bear in mind all the circumstances of the case—had now been in a great measure redressed; even the Ministry in England—Lord Liverpool was soon to be its head, and Castlereagh was to return to office—was looking forward hopefully to a successful issue. Wellington now stretched his hand to seize the second key of the frontier; he resolved to lay siege to Badajoz for the third time. Marmont, meanwhile, who after the fall of Ciudad was the most exposed of the French commanders, had done much to prepare himself against attack—he disposed of about forty thousand men; he had hastily fortified Salamanca with skill; it is to his credit that he anticipated Wellington's design; he wrote to his master that he ought to be strongly reinforced, and to have the command of a great army, which would enable him to march to

the relief of Badajoz. Napoleon, however, tartly replied that the defence of Badajoz was the affair of Soult, who, he declared, had not less than eighty thousand good soldiers; should Wellington make the suggested movement, Marmont was to fall on his communications, and send him back into Portugal. These views were, in principle, strategically correct, but they were founded on assumptions completely false,—the fatal results of directing war from a distance. Soult had not at this moment fifty thousand men around the eagles; he thought that D'Erlon near Badajoz could hold any enemy in check; he was engrossed with the contest in Andalusia, with the siege of Cadiz not yet abandoned, with projects against British power in Portugal; and though probably he could have done more than he did, he could hardly have accomplished what the Emperor expected from him. Napoleon's directions, therefore, were at odds with the facts; and Marmont was not in sufficient strength to strike Wellington's communications with effect, and to turn that General aside from his fixed purpose.

While Marmont had been protesting in vain, Wellington had steadily completed his preparations. He remained in person near Ciudad as long as possible, had the breaches repaired and the defences improved in order to conceal his real purpose; but he kept his eyes bent on his intended quarry, Badajoz. He had much of his siege train, and part of the material required, brought up the Tagus to Abrantes from Lisbon; all this was carried through Alemtejo to Elvas; the enemy was still uncertain whether he would

attack the fortress. Meantime he broke up from the Coa with the mass of his forces, marching along the main road he had taken care to construct; he appeared before Badajoz on the 16th of March, 1812, at the head of more than 50,000 men, of whom 30,000 were his best British soldiers. The place was invested on the following day, with a force perhaps 15,000 strong, which, however, could be largely augmented. Hill was in command of the covering army, which extended on both sides of the fortress, on the lookout for either Marmont or Soult. The garrison was almost taken by surprise, but Philippon had made everything ready for a determined defence; he nobly proved himself equal to a most arduous task. He had scoured the country around for supplies, and had sent the poorer population out of Badajoz: he had despatched many a messenger to Soult in the hope of obtaining aid from the Marshal; he had left nothing undone to strengthen the place entrusted to his care. He had connected Christoval with the main fortress by a bridge and a bridge head on the Guadiana; this outlying work could thus receive support if required. He had increased the artillery of the castle, and had flooded the approaches by damming up a little stream, the Rivillas; this protected the weakest point, the north-eastern front. He had also strengthened by different means the forts of Picurina and Pardaleras and the outlying work of St. Roque, external defences of the place; he had deepened the fosse around the enceinte and spread inundations where this was possible; and he had laid mines along the western front, the garrison

being too weak to cover every point. But Philippon had not sufficient munitions; and he had hardly more than 5000 men to oppose to an enemy in immensely superior numbers. D'Erlon who, we have seen, had been detached to observe Badajoz would have done well to support the garrison with part of his troops; but he fell back on the approach of Wellington, and took no part in the stirring events that followed.

Ground was broken on the 18th of March before the Picurina and St. Roque, which protected the eastern front of the fortress; a tempest of shot was rained on these outlying works, and on the bastions of Santa Maria and Trinidad in their rear. A bold sally of the garrison was repulsed with loss; but guns were brought to bear on the trenches from across the river; these raked them with destructive effect. The fire of the Picurina had slackened by the 25th, in fact, Philippon had to husband his powder; a furious assault was made on the fort, but the resistance was not less fierce and resolute; it was not until half of the defenders had fallen that the assailants mastered their hard won prize; and they were unable to retain it under the guns of the fortress. St. Roque still bravely maintained the struggle; but the threatened bastions were now exposed; yawning breaches were by degrees made in Santa Maria and Trinidad, and the adjoining curtains. The besieged, nevertheless, did not lose heart; they retrenched the breaches and made a new line of defence; they maintained a heavy fire from the ramparts; cleared the fosse which the enemy did not

command, and as the counterscarp had not been even reached plied their dangerous task in comparative safety. Things were in this state when Wellington was informed that Soult was approaching with a relieving army; he resolved not to be baffled for the third time and to risk everything in a general assault on Badajoz, in which his immensely superior forces might give him success. His dispositions for the attack were made for the night of the 6th of April; a combined effort was to be attempted in all directions; the fortress was to be surrounded by a circle of consuming fire. Picton's division was to escalade the castle, forcing its way over the hindrances in its path. The division of Leith was to make a feint against the Pardaleras and to assault part of the western front, which had been mined; false attacks were to be tried on other points; the divisions of Colville and that lately under Crawford, the flower of the British infantry, were to storm the breaches, whatever the cost. But Philippon had his preparations made; hard pressed and straitened as he was, he was undismayed by enemies in overwhelming numbers; he called on his weakened garrison to hold out to the last man; he did everything that was possible to the art of the engineer. He was not sufficiently strong to defend all the points that could be assailed; he properly concentrated his main force to cover the breaches; he had here accumulated extraordinary means of resistance. Bodies of sharpshooters, every man having three pieces were ranged along the imperilled ramparts; a formidable stockade, constructed with the most ingenious skill, was laid

along the front of the breaches; the bottom of the fosse was inundated and made a most grave obstacle; and a long line of what may b ecalled infernal machines was placed at the foot of the counterscarp which, I have said, had been left intact.[1]

Wellington spared the garrison the form of a summons; he knew what would be the indignant answer. The night of the 6th was dark, but still; it was a calm before a storm raised by the fury of man; hardly a sound was heard in the trenches or along the ramparts save the voice of the sentry saying that all was well in Badajoz. Soon after ten the two divisions charged to master the breaches, had reached the glacis, and were close to the place; bundles of hay were thrown into the fosse to fill it; the forlorn hopes and the storming parties boldly fell on. The columns of the assailants had soon rushed forward "deep and broad, coming on like streams of lava"; an appalling spectacle suddenly was seen. The ramparts were lit up with the blaze of rockets; the musketry of the sharpshooters made frightful havoc; the train of the deadly engines laid along the counterscarp, exploded, flinging out shells and other missiles; the inundated fosse swallowed up many victims; hundreds of brave men perished before they attained the breaches, yet still the assaulting columns

[1] Wellington, after the result, complained bitterly of this: "I trust that future armies will be equipped for sieges with the people necessary to carry them on as they ought to be; and that our engineers will learn how to put their batteries on the crest of the glacis, and to blow in the counterscarp, instead of placing them where the wall can be seen, leaving the poor officers to get into and cross the ditch as they can."—*Selection*, p. 594.

pressed on, maddened, shattered, yet determined to do or to die; here they were met by fresh and terrific obstacles. The stockade along the breaches proved impossible to break down; it presented a front of sword-blades fastened into beams, and of planks studded with sharp points of iron; the assailants dashed themselves against it in vain; they were crushed by the pressure of their comrades and rolled down into the fosse below, while the rattle of the musketry from the ramparts rang steadily out; the troubled air was rent with the sound of bursting projectiles; the shouts and jeers of the garrison swelled loud and high as the enemy was called on to "come and take Badajoz," yet these desperate onslaughts were repeated over and over again, and continued for the space of two hours; it was not until more than two thousand men had been slain, the fosse had been choked with the killed and the wounded, and the breaches had become a frightful scene of carnage, echoing with groans, execrations, and horrible sounds of passion, that a pause was made in the appalling struggle. But victory meanwhile had declared for Wellington at other points of the beleaguered fortress. Picton's division had carried the castle after a brave resistance, though it has been said that the German troops who defended it hardly did their duty. The feint on Pardaleras was not pressed home; but though there was a panic about a mine which, proved, however, a false alarm, the part of the western front that was attacked was stormed; in truth, the French were scarcely anywhere in sufficient force. The victors now took the garrison

at the breaches in reverse and exacted a fearful and bloody vengeance; the assailants had soon swarmed into the town. Philippon and his chief officers made their escape into Christoval, but Badajoz was surrendered on the morning of the 7th of June. The losses of Wellington from first to last had not been less than 5000 men, out of an attacking force of some 18,000; the losses of the garrison were 1500; there never has been a more fiercely contested siege. History drops a veil on the hideous excesses that followed; but in the case of towns taken under these conditions this was the evil custom of war in that age.

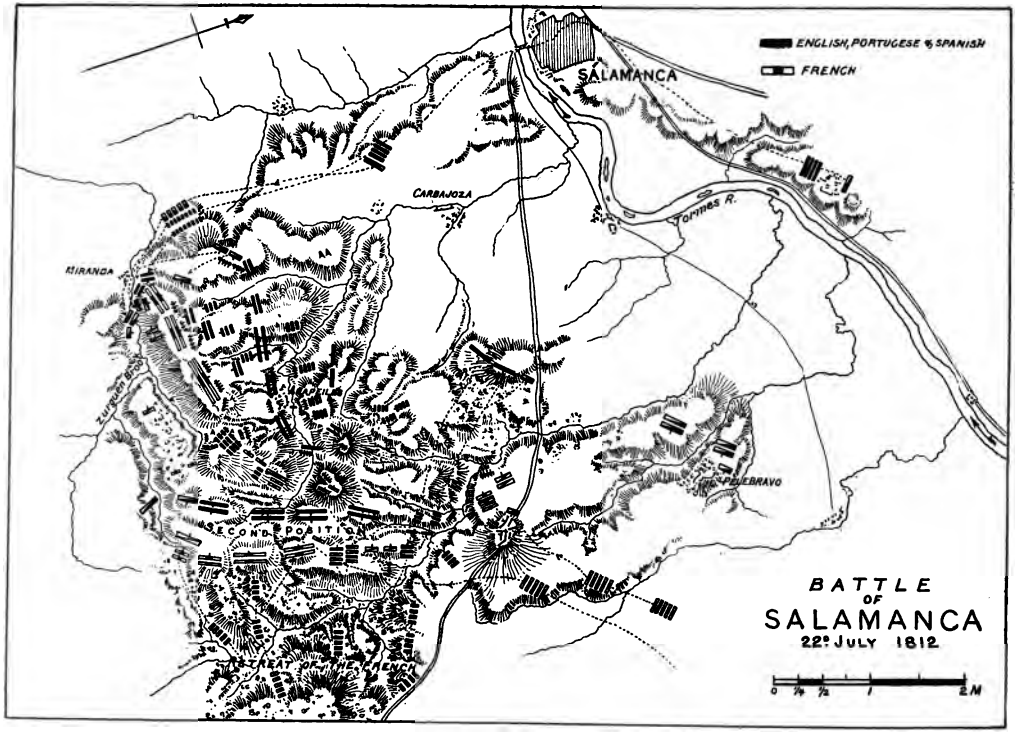
The second key of the frontier had thus been taken, enormous as had been the cost of success. Spain now lay open to the attack of Wellington; things had changed since he clung to the lines before Lisbon. Soult had meanwhile been approaching Badajoz from Seville, but his advance had been tentative and slow; he appears to have had no communication with D'Erlon; when apprised by Philippon of the fall of the fortress he retraced his steps, and was around Llerena for a few days; he ultimately made his way into Andalusia. The Marshal's operations might have been more bold,—this was Napoleon's distinct judgment,—but he had not brought with him more than twenty-five thousand men, a force not sufficient to have compelled the raising of the siege; he was hampered, besides, by the fruitless attack on Cadiz and by Ballasteros and a large Spanish army; and he was contemplating a great movement which, with the support of Suchet, might force Wellington to

retreat even to the Portuguese capital. The British General seems for a moment to have wished to pursue and attack Soult, and he would have been much superior in strength; but he was recalled northwards by the operations of Marmont. That Marshal, complying with his master's orders, had fallen on the communications of Wellington, had passed Ciudad and Almeida, had reached Celorico, and had spread consternation as far as Coimbra; but he had not forced his adversary away from Badajoz, and before long he was in retreat into Leon. Wellington now placed his army between the Agueda and the Coa, and made preparations for the invasion of Spain. He disposed, including his reserve, of not far from 100,000 men; he could place in his first line some 56,000, of whom 32,000 were British troops; but his 24,000 Portuguese had been made excellent soldiers; they were now known as "the fighting-cocks of the army." This force was still much inferior to that of the enemy as a whole; but the French armies were at immense distances; their chiefs notoriously would not act in concert; their nominal head, Joseph, had no real authority; they were everywhere harassed by the guerrillas and by Spanish armies, beaten in the field, but never subdued; Wellington had thus a reasonable prospect of success, very different from what had been the case in 1809. The British chief, with characteristic insight, took careful precautions before he advanced, to make the movement as secure as was possible. He had left Hill in Estremadura with some fifteen thousand men; that able lieutenant had destroyed the bridge at Almaraz, and the

fortified works which had been made to protect it; he had thus severed the communications between Marmont and Soult by the Tagus. Hill, too, had repaired the great bridge at Alcantara, and this had much facilitated his junction with his chief; these two operations had been admirably designed. At the same time Wellington urged the Ministers at home to make frequent descents with squadrons on the coast, in order to assist the guerrillas in the north and to occupy the French army on the spot; and he earnestly entreated that the British force, which had been expected from Sicily for some months, should be landed on the seaboard of Catalonia, to hold Suchet in check. This operation, he hoped, would indirectly give him the support of about twenty thousand men.

The only army immediately confronting Wellington was that of Marmont, which, when concentrated, would be about forty-five thousand strong, but which at this juncture was much scattered, chiefly between Salamanca and the Douro. This army, the remnant of that of Massena, had been reorganised by its new commander; it was for the most part composed of excellent troops; but there was a certain admixture of new levies. The only armies that could be expected to reinforce Marmont were that of the North under Caffarelli, who had replaced Dorsenne, and that of the Centre, of which the nominal head was Joseph; these could hardly be expected to send the Marshal more than twenty thousand or twenty-five thousand men. As for Suchet, he was bound to Valencia and was looking out for a hostile descent from Sicily;

Soult practically refused to leave Andalusia, or to weaken his army in that province, though Joseph had ordered him to send a detachment to Marmont, nay, to evacuate Andalusia if necessary, orders which, had they been obeyed at this time, might have changed the fortunes of the campaign at hand. Wellington was, therefore, not really overmatched; he broke up from his cantonments in the first days of June and directed his movements on Salamanca, where he was received as a deliverer by the exulting citizens, like nearly all Spaniards, deadly enemies of the French. Marmont, I have said, had fortified Salamanca as well as he could, in order to make a barrier against the invasion he dreaded, after the loss of Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo; he had destroyed a number of religious houses and had cleared the town of buildings, which might be of use to the enemy; but he had made three large convents strong points of defence, and one of these, San Vincente, was perched on a cliff overhanging the Tormes, an affluent of the Douro, flowing by the place. Wellington was compelled to lay siege to the convents, and this delayed him ten or twelve days; San Vincente was not captured until the 27th of June. During this time Marmont had approached the Tormes at the head of some twenty-five thousand men, who erelong were considerably reinforced; the Marshal sought an opportunity to strike, but he found that he had been on a bootless errand. In a short time he had retreated behind the Douro, spreading his army, now assembled on a broad front, from Toro on the Douro, beyond Tordesillas and thence further to the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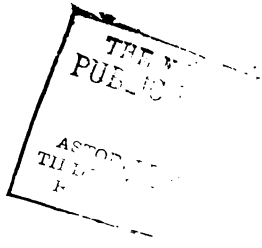
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Pisuerga, holding the bridge of Tordesillas upon the Douro, which would enable him to cross over the river. In this position he was safe, it may be said, from attack; he had drawn near Caffarelli and Joseph; he commanded a very fine army of men of one race. But he sent messages to Caffarelli and Joseph very properly seeking assistance from both; and both—a fact that deserves special notice—had held out hopes of support, if in very ambiguous language.

In this position of affairs the obvious course for Marmont would have been to remain behind the Douro, and to await the reinforcements that might be on the way; the Marshal knew that Wellington was at hand, and that Wellington had a superiority of force. But though Marmont was a brilliant soldier, an excellent tactician in the field, and possessed of no ordinary organising skill, he was a somewhat vain and presumptuous man; the intelligent French soldiery had little trust in him; a phrase was current in their camps "Marmont fights, but fights to be beaten." The Marshal resolved to leave his point of vantage, and to try a game of manœuvres with the British chief, which might perhaps compel his adversary to retreat, perhaps offer a chance of a successful battle. On the 15th and 16th of July he made a feint with his right and began to cross the Douro at Toro; this movement had the effect of turning Wellington's left; that General had his army at Canizal near a feeder of the main river. A trial of strength in this position would have been dangerous in the extreme; both armies would have stood on what tactically is called a front to a flank, that is, would have

fought on a line not covering their communications and means of retreat; Marmont had no intention of running such a risk. He countermarched, therefore, rapidly to his left, crossed the Douro at Tordesillas and another point; and advanced to the upper Guarena, the feeder before mentioned; his object now being to turn Wellington's right. A series of brilliant movements followed; both armies marched in parallel lines, over an open country, each watching an opportunity which did not come; but the French distinctly outmarched their enemy; Marmont, continually pressing Wellington's right, reached the Tormes and crossed the river at fords which Wellington believed were guarded by a Spanish garrison in forts. The British commander, outmanœuvred and outflanked, chiefly owing to the celerity of the French movements, now fell back and took a position on the heights covering Salamanca to the south; he reached this ground on the 21st of July. The situation had become critical for him; for his line of retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo was not firmly held, nay, was already in some degree menaced, and should he abandon Salamanca he would give up a prize to Marmont. The Marshal was fully alive to the advantage he had won; he advanced to a village called Calvarossa, the mass of his army, however, being somewhat in the rear; his purpose was to threaten his adversary's communications with Ciudad; to fall on them if a good chance offered, perhaps to fight if there was a real prospect of success. On the 22nd of July Marmont continued his movement; he began to press on Wellington's line

at least to approach it within a near distance; one of his divisions seized a hill called the Great Arapeiles, near an opposite height of the same name, which was occupied by a part of the allied army. But the Marshal's forces were not completely in hand; there was a small interval of space between his centre and his left, though this was hardly of importance as yet, and his troops were rather entangled in the woodland that spread along the ground he held.

Had Marmont at this moment kept to the vantage-ground he had won, and drawn together his somewhat scattered troops, he could have compelled Wellington to leave Salamanca, and to seek his line of retreat on Ciudad Rodrigo; he might even have harassed the retiring columns. But he continued to edge nearer and nearer to his adversary's right, whether to challenge him to a battle is still uncertain; his left, under Thomières, gradually extending itself increased the gap that separated it from the rather ill-formed centre, and became isolated at a distance from its supports. This false movement was instantly perceived by Wellington,—his exclamation, "*Mon cher Alava, Marmont est perdu,*" is well known; he seized the occasion as became a master of tactics, whose dispositions on the field have been seldom equalled. He directed the leaders of his centre, which was well in hand, to fall in full force on this part of the enemy's line; at the same time he ordered his brother-in-law, Pakenham, to attack Thomières's exposed wing, to overwhelm it, and to secure victory. The effect of these perfectly conceived

strokes was extraordinary, sudden, and complete. The men of the allied centre rushed down from the Arapeiles where they stood, sweeping away the enemies who tried to arrest their onslaught; "disregarding the storm of bullets discharged by the French artillery, which seemed to shear away the whole surface of the earth." Erelong Pakenham had rolled up Thomières's divisions in spite of a brave and stern resistance. The French were almost surrounded, and utterly routed; a fine charge of cavalry scattered them into a horde of fugitives. Marmont from the Great Arapeiles beheld the disastrous scene; he sent messenger after messenger to try to restore the battle; but his efforts would have been fruitless in any event, and he was struck down by a cannon-shot at a critical moment. The result of the day was now not really doubtful; but justice should be done to a very able and skilful man, who still made a desperate attempt to bid for victory. Clausel, a young general of the highest promise, contrived to rally and strengthen the broken French centre; he even ventured on a bold counter-stroke, "the result went nigh to shake the whole battle." But victory, under these conditions, belongs to the commander who has the last fresh reserve; this was launched by Wellington against the enemy; "the allied host, righting itself like a gallant ship after a sudden gust, bore onward again in blood and gloom," and drove the French army in defeat from the field. Nevertheless Clausel admirably covered the retreat; with his colleagues he often stemmed the advancing tide of his foes; but had not the fords

on the Tormes been left open, against Wellington's positive orders, the beaten host must have been all but destroyed.[1]

Besides eleven guns and two eagles, the French lost at Salamanca 6000 men killed and wounded, 7000 prisoners were moreover taken, not more than 20,000 men held together for some days; the victory, in a word, was complete and decisive. The loss of the Allies was upwards of 5000 men, for the defeated army made a fine defence; but Wellington was master of the situation for a time. Clausel conducted his retreat with conspicuous skill; his rearward divisions were once or twice smitten, but he made nearly forty miles in less than twenty hours; he rightly directed his movement on Aravelo, not on Tordesillas as the British General thought would be the case; he wished to draw near Madrid and King Joseph. The pursuit of Wellington, as was his wont, was slow; in fact, as the historian of the Peninsular War has written, "the vigorous following of a beaten enemy was never a prominent characteristic of the British chief"[2]; but Wellington did his young

[1] Wellington has thus briefly described the main features of the battle of Salamanca: "Marmont ought to have given me a pont d'or and he would have made a handsome operation of it. But instead of that, after manœuvring all the morning in the usual French style, nobody knew for what object, he at last pressed before my right in such a manner, at the same time without engaging, that he would have either carried our Arapeiles, or he would have confined us entirely to our position. This was not to be endured, and we fell upon him, turning his left flank, and I never saw an army receive such a beating."—*Selection*, p. 615.

[2] Napier, *Peninsular War*, iii., 67; edition published by Routledge.

opponent justice; he has expressed high admiration of the operations of Clausel. Marmont from his couch of pain must have felt bitter anguish at the intelligence that soon reached his successor; Caffarelli sent a reinforcement to the defeated army; Joseph had actually marched out of Madrid at the head of more than fourteen thousand men in order to support Marmont upon the Douro. The King might have joined Clausel at Aravelo, and thus made a good stand against Wellington; but he was appalled by the result of the late battle; he fell back behind the Guadarrama and returned to his capital. The allied army continued to dog Clausel's footsteps; but the French commander made good his way to Burgos, where, though he had been wounded at Salamanca, he rallied and reorganised his army with indefatigable care. Leaving a considerable detachment to observe Clausel, Wellington now turned against Joseph, but his movements once more were not rapid; the King was given time to fly from Madrid, with his mock Court and a train of many thousand followers. The British General entered the capital of Spain on the 12th of August, 1812; he was greeted with enthusiastic acclaim; the moral results of his appearance were no doubt immense. But it has truly been remarked that he might have done more than he did had he been a chief of the type of Turenne or Napoleon. It was probably in his power, had he struck quickly home, to have annihilated Clausel and his shattered forces; and he ought to have been able to have caught and routed Joseph before the fugitive had made his escape from Madrid

But strategy, in its grandest aspects, was never one of the strong points of Wellington; this is manifest in several passages of his career.

Wellington was raised a step in the British Peerage for Salamanca, and was made commander-in-chief of the Spanish armies, honours nobly deserved and justly won. He remained in Madrid a few days only; he seems rather to have offended jealous Spanish pride; his stay was chiefly remarkable for the exasperation shown by the citizens to the handful of politicians who had adhered to Joseph. Erelong Clausel had again appeared in the field, having rallied his army with characteristic resource; he was in command of some 30,000 men; he threatened the detachment left behind to hold him in check; this was from 15,000 to 18,000 strong. Wellington broke up from Madrid on the 1st of September; with his Portuguese, he had perhaps 35,000 men, for his army had suffered much from disease; he was ultimately joined by some 11,000 Spaniards. The Allies had a great superiority of force, when the isolated detachment had come into line; the British General endeavoured to bring Clausel to bay; but his enemy retarded his advance with consummate skill, defending position after position not without success[1]: he finally made good his way to Burgos, whence he effected his junction with the French army of the North. Wellington was before Burgos on the 8th and 9th of September, he was on the line of the

[1] Wellington gave this honourable testimony to Clausel: "He held every position till turned and then drew off in splendid order," —Sir H. Maxwell, *History*, i., 290.

communications of the French with Madrid; he may have believed that he could easily reduce the place and then strike a blow with effect, but his real purpose has hardly been made known. He had sate down before Burgos by the 10th, but his calculations were wholly frustrated; the siege is a very remarkable instance of what the value of a weak fortress may be in war; how it may baffle an enemy, nay, bring him into grave danger. Burgos was an ancient fortification of little strength; but it was protected by entrenchments within the wall; it was covered on the northern front by a hornwork; it had a very able commandant, Dubreton, and a brave garrison of some 2000 men. The hornwork was stormed on the 19th, but Wellington had no siege artillery; his guns were comparatively few and weak; he had to resort to mines to destroy the defences. Four assaults were made against narrow breaches; Dubreton and his men still clung to the entrenchments they had admirably held. But meanwhile a formidable tempest of war had been gathering against the British commander. Massena had been sent to the southern borders of France; but the veteran refused to take the field; Clausel had been disabled by a festering wound; Souham, rather an elderly man, was placed at the head of Marmont's late army, which had been reinforced to 40,000 men by the addition of a levy of conscripts. Caffarelli, too, was at hand with 10,000 or 12,000 men; their united forces were much superior to those of Wellington, in the quality of the troops, nay, perhaps in numbers. The British General raised the siege on the 21st of

October; he had lost fully 2000 men; he had certainly delayed too long around the fortress.

While Wellington had been laying siege to Burgos, great events had occurred in other parts of Spain. Joseph had reached Valencia on the 1st of September, and with his motley following had been well received by Suchet, who — created by Napoleon Duke of Albufera — had, as usual, governed his province well, and had even been able to collect its revenue. The Marshal, however, had to provide against the expedition which had disembarked from Sicily, and which, though of less force than had been expected, was nevertheless sufficient to keep him on the spot. Joseph sent peremptory orders to Soult to quit Andalusia and to join the Army of the Centre with his own. Soult obeyed, but with a bad grace, after despatching a protest to the Emperor, which did not improve his relations with the King. The Marshal, I have said, had for some time been projecting operations which in his opinion would compel Wellington to return into Portugal; he aimed at making Andalusia a great military base; whence being reinforced to large extent, he might be able to turn the Lines, and to advance on Lisbon. Even after Salamanca he insisted that this was the true strategic course; the Army of the Centre should unite with his own; this would give a new, perhaps a fortunate turn to the war; Andalusia in any event, should not be abandoned. But he was forced to forego these ambitious hopes, and to evacuate the province which he had occupied to little purpose, and which the invaders ought never to have entered

while Wellington had his army in Portugal. Soult, of course, withdrew from Cadiz, besieged in vain for months, the forces which the siege had greatly reduced; he gathered his outlying detachments together; he set off for Seville with a heavy heart, carrying away the spoil of a devastated land.[1] He was harassed by Ballasteros and a Spanish army, while his lieutenant, D'Erlon, was pursued by Hill, but he reached the borders of Murcia in September, and was in Valencia by the first days of October, not far from the historic field of Almanza. His junction with the King had now been effected; the united French armies, not reckoning that of Suchet, were not far from 60,000 strong; it was agreed, after some hot discussion, to march to and regain the Spanish capital, which Wellington, it was known, had left. Joseph re-entered Madrid on the 2nd day of November; Hill, who after pursuing D'Erlon, had held a position on the upper Tagus, with a composite army of some 25,000 men, having retreated through the Guadarrama to join his chief. Wellington, by this time falling back from Burgos, was now gravely threatened by two armies, that of Souham and that of Joseph and Soult; each of these was probably a match for his own, if for the present they were far apart; such had been the result of

[1] Soult had taken away with him a number of important pictures, among others the magnificent *Dona di Gloria* of Murillo, and placed these in his mansion in Paris. Many years afterwards the Marshal showed the collection to Lord Cowley, nephew of Wellington, and remarked that "no doubt the Duke had a gallery of the same kind." The reply was excellent: "Non, M. le Maréchal; *il vous a suivi.*"

VISCOUNT ROWLAND HILL.
(From the painting by H. W Pickersgill, R.A.)

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
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maintaining a fruitless siege. French writers, who have contended that in this position of affairs, the British General, like Napoleon in the campaign of Italy, could have fallen on and defeated his divided enemies, appear to be altogether in error.

During these events Wellington in retreat from Burgos was followed by Souham with some 40,000 men, Caffarelli having gone back with the Army of the North. The operations of Souham were cautious; some engagements of no importance took place; but the British soldiery, as so often has been the case, when falling back a long distance before an enemy, began to show symptoms of insubordination and want of discipline. Meanwhile Joseph had marched out of Madrid in order to effect his junction with Souham,—a rapid and well-conceived movement; he was accompanied by Soult and his Chief-of-Staff Jourdan; the combined armies, about 90,000 strong, were on the upper Douro by the 8th of November, advancing in full pursuit of Wellington. The British chief had crossed the Douro some days before; he was joined by Hill, on the Tormes, on the 7th of November; he had reached the scenes of his late victory; he was now at the head of more than 60,000 men, a number, however, of these being Spanish levies. Wellington placed himself on a very extended line, from Alva, on the upper Tormes, on his right to Calvarossa occupied by Marmont on the 21st of July, and thence to a point called San Christoval on his left; the distance was nearly fifteen miles. He was ready, it has been said, to accept battle, to restore, as had been the case at Busaco,

the confidence of an army that had been shaken; but this appears to be, at the very least, uncertain. On the 14th of November the enemy had crossed the Tormes, and was even menacing Wellington's line of retreat; an important council of war was held; Jourdan's voice was for fighting a great battle, at least for attacking Hill, who was drawing back from Alba; the odds would certainly have been largely in favour of the French. But the memory of Salamanca disturbed Soult, seldom ready to seize the occasion and to strike home; he insisted that an attempt should be made to outflank Wellington, and to cut him off from Ciudad Rodrigo, in his retreat, very much as had been the object of Marmont before; Joseph yielded to counsels that were perhaps unfortunate. The movement of the French was circuitous and slow; it has been compared to the hovering of a wily kite; Wellington, skilfully drawing his army together, reached Ciudad Rodrigo hardly molested. He had lost in the retreat nearly nine thousand men; he vented his displeasure in an address to his troops, severely condemning their conduct since they had left Burgos. Many soldiers, even officers, had behaved ill; but this indiscriminate censure was hardly deserved; it was characteristic of a stern and obdurate nature which deemed military licence an unpardonable crime.

To superficial observers the retreat from Burgos seemed to mark a turn in the tide of the war against Wellington. He had, after entering the capital of Spain in triumph, and striking the line of the communications of the French, been compelled to fall

back an immense distance; on the Tormes he had been exposed to no doubtful peril; his army had been partly demoralised and much weakened; he had been forced back almost to the Portuguese frontier. And his strategy after Salamanca does not commend itself to an impartial student of the military art. He ought not to have allowed the defeated army of Marmont to recover itself, and become formidable again, in order merely to appear in Madrid; this was sacrificing the primary to the secondary end. He might, perhaps, at this juncture have routed Joseph; he ought not to have delayed before Burgos for weeks, and to have risked the issue of the campaign for an insignificant object.

These mistakes, and certainly they were mistakes, enabled the French armies, scattered over Spain, to gather against him in greatly superior strength; they obliged him to make a dangerous retrograde movement; he ought to have been defeated near Salamanca but for the hesitations of Soult. But if we examine the operations of Wellington as a whole, from Fuentes d'Onoro to the close of 1812, they bear witness to his great and characteristic merit in war. He was, no doubt, taken by surprise at El Boden; it was fortunate when he stood on the Caya that Marmont and Soult would not agree to attack him. But when, in the summer of 1811, the position of affairs seemed of evil omen, he maintained his undaunted and wise confidence; in the dissemination of the hostile armies, in the disputes of their chiefs, in the preparations of the contest with Russia, he beheld the hopeful promise of final success. He made admirable

arrangements for two great sieges; he seized the occasion with energy and skill; he captured Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz under the beard, so to speak, of the enemy. When the keys of Spain had thus passed into his hands, he conducted the invasion that followed with fine judgment, at least at first; and though he was outmanœuvred by Marmont, his tactics at Salamanca were a masterpiece in the field. And the results of his achievements had been very great; he had, with forces sometimes much inferior in strength, destroyed the renown and confidence of the French armies; he had made the invaders leave Andalusia, never to return; he had practically upset the tottering throne of Joseph. The catastrophe which befell Napoleon in the north, and which shook his power on the Continent to its base, was to open a new career to Wellington in Spain; he was erelong to overwhelm the enemies in his path, to strike them down in a decisive battle, and to carry the war into France itself, while the perishing Empire was crashing down in ruins.

CHAPTER VII

VITORIA

The invasion of Russia in 1812—The Retreat from Moscow—Great rising in Prussia after the disasters of the French—The Czar continues the war—Efforts of Napoleon to restore his military power—Lutzen and Bautzen—Negotiations—Policy of Metternich—The armistice of Pleisnitz—Events in Spain largely influence the conduct of the Allies—Position of the French armies after the retreat from Burgos—They are considerably reduced—Directions of Napoleon for the Campaign of 1813 in Spain—They reach Joseph late and are imperfectly carried out—Dissemination of the French armies—Wellington disposes of a great military force—His plan for the Campaign of 1813—He turns the position of the French on the Esla and the Douro—Joseph is surprised and compelled to fall back—Confused and ill-managed retreat of the French armies from Valladolid to Vitoria—Battle of Vitoria—Complete defeat of Joseph—Immense results of the victory.

AFTER Salamanca and the conquest of Madrid, the retreat from Burgos caused much discontent in England; murmurs were loudly heard that the Peninsular War could never come to an end. The nation, too, had been engaged in a contest with the United States, which markedly injured its renown on the seas, unchallenged since the great day of Trafalgar; the Continental System

had continued to produce its disastrous effects, in bankruptcies, disorders, and the depreciation of a paper currency. These events, however, important as they were, were thrown into the shade by the awful catastrophe of the French invasion of Russia in 1812. Napoleon had steadily carried out the policy, in military as well as in civil affairs, of striking down the great Power of the North, to which he had for months turned his mighty energies. Concealing the movement by all kinds of feints, he had drawn together the armed strength of the West, supported by enormous reserves, to assail and subdue the Czar in the East; he had directed this from the Rhine and the Danube to the Vistula; in the spring of 1812 it was ready to march to the Niemen, drawing with it a huge material of war; the world had never yet beheld such a display of a conqueror's power. Austria and Prussia, with secret reluctance, but with apparent consent, had furnished contingents to the gigantic host; France, Germany, and Italy had sent their youth to join in the great crusade. The Emperor left Paris in proud confidence, disregarding the entreaties of more than one wise counsellor; the alarm, nay, the disaffection showing itself from the Seine to the Rhine, and the Spanish ulcer, malignant and growing. At Dresden the Continent bowed before its lord; kings, princes, and potentates lavished their homage; flattery described the enterprise as a triumphal march for the summer. Four hundred thousand men, sustained by two hundred thousand in the rear, crossed the Niemen in the last days of June; but

this immense host was composed of many races and tongues; the forces of Austria and Prussia, foes at heart, formed the extremes of the wings. The advance of the Grand Army—a time-honoured name—was impeded by many and grave obstacles, and its losses were great from the first moment; but Napoleon's earlier operations were admirably designed, and for some weeks were of the highest promise. The main army of Alexander was placed in imminent danger, owing to the unwise advice of a pedantic theorist; and though his secondary army made its escape, chiefly through the neglect of the young King of Westphalia, both were compelled, widely divided as yet, to retreat. Napoleon pursued, but the pursuit was checked by the impediments inherent to such an enterprise; Barclay and Bagration ultimately combined their forces; a bloody battle was fought at Smolensk, the portal, as its name was, of old Muscovy; the two Russian commanders, imitating Wellington at last, fell back over an immense space, destroying the means of subsistence in a devastated and poor country. The Emperor advanced from Smolensk with the best part of his forces, about 160,000 strong, throwing out, however, powerful armies on both sides of the line of his march, in order to secure his communications and his flanks; Barclay and Bagration were replaced by Kutusoff; the terrible conflict at Borodino followed, not decisive, but one of appalling carnage; the Russian army continued its retreat. Napoleon entered Moscow on the 14th of September—the extreme limit of the march of the Tricolour; he had

lost fully fifty thousand men since he had broken up from Smolensk.

The conflagration of Moscow, whatever the cause, might have warned the Emperor that with his diminished forces he was isolated in the midst of a still unconquered country, and was already in a position that might become most critical. But Napoleon cherished the hope that the Czar would treat; he was deceived by his wily foe, Kutusoff; he lingered five weeks in the ruin of the half-effaced city; boasting that a march on St. Petersburg was within his power; ignorant of what was in the womb of the immediate future. On the 19th of October the memorable retreat began; it is not probable that had Moscow remained intact it could have been used as quarter for the invaders through the winter, "whence they would have emerged like a ship from the ice of the North." The Emperor's intention was to make his way to Kalouga and to establish himself in a country unravaged and with a milder climate; but he was repulsed by his adversary at Malo Iaroslavetz. The Grand Army, laden with the spoils of Moscow, and already, too, like an undisciplined horde, though still perhaps ninety thousand strong, was forced to retreat through the devastated region in which it had advanced. Things looked comparatively well for a few days; but an Arctic winter, with its ice and its snows, fell suddenly on the rapidly dwindling host; supplies were not to be found on the wasted line of march; the Russians, though timidly, hung on the enemy's flanks; when Smolensk was reached some forty thousand starving

fugitives, demoralised, and breaking even from their chief, were all that remained of the legions which had proved at Borodino what they were. Napoleon had hoped to find a safe haven at Smolensk; but two large hostile armies, bearing back the lieutenants, who were to make the advance on Moscow secure, were menacing his rear on either side; it had become necessary to continue the appalling retreat. The army, only slightly restored—the soldiery had recklessly pillaged the magazines—abandoned Smolensk between the 14th and the 16th of November, but it had separated into somewhat distant masses, perhaps in order to procure food; Kutusoff, who had become bolder, attacked it with effect; Ney, who covered the retreat with wonderful courage and energy, was nearly cut off, and with difficulty made his escape. The scenes on the march from Smolensk were even more terrible than those which had been witnessed before; the army was quickly reduced to less than twenty-five thousand men; as it drew near the Beresina the Emperor learned that his retreat was barred by the two armies, which had been converging to close on his rear. Napoleon had not been equal to himself since he had left Moscow; but two of his marshals had joined him at this crisis, with reinforcements of considerable strength; he effected the passage of the river with considerable skill, losing, however, many thousands of disbanded men; he carried across perhaps 40,000 troops who held together. He left the wrecks of his army at Smorgone, conduct of at least a questionable kind, and gave the command to Murat, a bad choice; the

retreat went on as before to Wilna; but it was in vain that additions were made to the perishing host; Murat lost his head and had only one idea, flight. About the middle of December some 20,000 spectres crossed the Niemen in little knots and bands; these were the remains of the 400,000 men who had formed the first line of the Grand Army; and the reserve of 200,000 had cruelly suffered. The catastrophe was like that which befell the Assyrian tyrant; it is doubtful if 80,000 of the 600,000 men were ever seen under the eagles again.

This unparalleled disaster was quickly to prove how precarious was the structure of Napoleon's Empire. Schwartzenberg, the leader of the Austrian contingent, had allowed one of the hostile armies that had reached the Beresina to pass; he had soon brought back his forces, almost unscathed, to the Vistula. York, a general of the Prussian contingent, abandoned Macdonald with his soldiers to a man; he was welcomed as a hero by the whole Prussian nation. Germany, from the Niemen to the Elbe, rose up in patriotic passion; the King of Prussia, hesitating and alarmed for a time, was swept into a mighty movement to avenge the humiliations and the wrongs of years; Alexander, against Kutusoff's entreaties, crossed the Vistula and proclaimed himself the deliverer of an enthralled continent. The survivors of the Grand Army, perhaps forty thousand strong, and now under the command of Eugene Beauharnais, were borne back by the universal rising to the Elbe; they were islanded in a flood of enemies on all sides; the French garrisons shut up in the

Prussian fortresses were the only other signs of the domination of France in that kingdom. The Emperor, however, though wrathful and troubled at the sight of a catastrophe surpassing his worst fears, and disturbed by the position of affairs at home, had no thought even of negotiating with his foes ; he was only intent on finding resources to continue the war. He had expected when he had left his army, to have two hundred thousand men on the Niemen; he had now not more than a fifth part of that force on the Elbe. His throne, too, had been menaced by an obscure plotter, whose efforts, though fruitless, had startled Paris; and it had been remarked that Paris had no real faith in his dynasty. Yet at this crisis he appealed, and with prodigious effect, to the pride and the martial spirit of France, bent on maintaining the supremacy on the Continent which she still possessed. Napoleon's efforts were gigantic, and his marvellous power of organisation was displayed to the utmost; but he was earnestly seconded by the will of a united people, as strongly expressed perhaps as in 1792–93. Discontent and murmuring for the present ceased ; the Emperor called out the conscripts of 1813 and even of 1814; the French youth gathered in thousands around the eagles. At the same time he restored the artillery he had lost; he worked hard to form again a mighty force of cavalry; he recalled the best of his officers and troops from Spain to strengthen and improve the newly raised levies. In less than three months he had 200,000 men in line; and these were ultimately increased to more than 500,000. But though an

extraordinary creation of genius and power, the new Grand Army was very different from that which had crossed the Niemen the year before, so far as this was composed of French elements. Its infantry was largely a multitude of boys; its cavalry was comparatively scanty and raw; its artillery, if imposing, was ill-organised; it was in every sense a very imperfect instrument of war.

Napoleon took the field in the end of April, 1813; he was soon joined by the troops of Eugene Beauharnais, the remains of the immense host that had been assembled to invade Russia. The united Prussian and Russian armies had meanwhile advanced into the plains of Saxony, in order to encourage the mighty rising already stirring nearly all Germany; this was a dangerous movement in a military sense; it exposed them to their great enemy when far from their base. The hostile forces encountered each other on the historic field of Lutzen; the French levies fought with the valour of the race; the Allies were compelled to retreat. Napoleon now entered Dresden in triumph, though his want of cavalry had made his late success fruitless; another and a much greater battle took place at Bautzen, on the verge of Bohemia, along the heads of the Spree; it was indecisive, but his enemies were again worsted. Things now looked badly for the cause of the Allies; had the Emperor boldly followed up his victory he might have put down the German movement for a time, nay, have stood out again the lord of the Continent. But events were to take an extraordinary turn; the great believer in the power of the sword was to

try to make assurance doubly sure, and to find his calculations completely baffled; the way was to be prepared for his ultimate overthrow. Napoleon seems to have been convinced for some months that his marriage had made Austria a firm ally, to be reckoned upon in any case; when he felt himself strong enough to enter the lists in Germany he invited Austria to join him in attacking Prussia, and offered her the tempting bribe of Silesia, torn from her by Frederick the Great half a century before. The affairs of Austria were now in the hands of the far-sighted and calm-minded Metternich; in the state of things created by the events of 1812 he saw a prospect of restoring, to some extent, the power his country had lost in a series of wars, and of relieving Germany, too, from the unnatural supremacy of France. He therefore eluded the offer of the bribe; and gradually with consummate skill, he assumed the attitude of a mediator between the belligerent powers, while he made military preparations to carry out his policy, and to throw the sword of his master into the balance. His sympathies certainly were with the Allies, and probably he foresaw that Austria would be drawn into a conflict with Napoleon in the long run; but it is fair to add that the peace he wished to establish would have left Napoleon by far the chief part of his Empire. The conduct of Metternich, dictated by profound statecraft, and savouring, no doubt, in some degree, of guile, exasperated, nay, incensed Napoleon; he resolved to avenge himself on Austria for what he called her gross breach of faith; he even offered to treat with the Czar, in order to turn his arms

against her. The Allies, however, held together; Metternich inclined more and more to their side; Napoleon, suspecting part at least of the truth, determined to defy even their united forces, and to contend, if necessary, against embattled Europe. To accomplish this it was essential to increase his military power; he believed that he would gain more by time than any coalition could; he signed an armistice at Pleisnitz in June, 1813; this has been called the greatest mistake of his life. Nevertheless his position was so commanding that all was hesitation and doubt for some weeks; Metternich and notably his master were slow in making up their minds. Events in the distant theatre of the war in Spain did much to decide their halting purpose; I pass on to direct attention to them.

The situation in the Peninsula appeared to be not hopeless for the invaders after the retreat from Burgos. Salamanca had been a terrible defeat; the flight from Madrid had been a disaster for Joseph; Andalusia had been permanently lost. But Wellington had been forced back to the verge of Portugal; and though his resources for war were being largely increased, he had narrowly escaped very grave dangers. The French armies, at the close of 1812, were extended upon an immense front, from Valencia, on the south-east, to the Biscayan seaboard; they still numbered much more than two hundred and fifty thousand men on paper. But Napoleon, after the late catastrophe, was obliged, we have seen, greatly to reduce these forces when he was reorganising the shattered power of France; he drew nearly

30,000 men from Spain; these, with their officers, were the flower of his troops in that kingdom. In the military operations of 1813 the French were probably not more than 180,000 strong, perhaps not 150,000 in arms around the eagles. This force, as before, was divided into five armies, that of Suchet, in Valencia and the provinces in the east; that of the north, under the command of Clausel, protecting the communications between Madrid and Bayonne; that of the Centre, now in the hands of D'Erlon, spread for the most part around the capital; that of Soult, who had been replaced by Gazan—the Marshal had been recalled from Spain—disseminated in the valley of the upper Tagus, and, finally, that of Marmont, still called the Army of Portugal, on the Tormes and in the valley of the upper Douro, with Reille, a capable officer, at its head. The first four armies, however, were beset by enemies in almost every direction, and it was a weighty task for the Army of Portugal to match Wellington on the borders of Leon. The expedition from Sicily kept Suchet near the coast; Aragon and Catalonia swarmed with guerrillas. The rising in the north, conducted by Mina and other skilful chiefs, had become more formidable than ever since the attack on Burgos; it resembled, it was said, the war in La Vendée; Clausel was not sufficiently strong to put it down anywhere. As for the army of D'Erlon and that of Gazan, they were threatened by two or three Spanish armies, not powerful indeed, but still a danger, and requiring to be held in check and observed. For the moment, however, the invaders

were in comparative safety, at least until Wellington should appear, in force, on the scene.

In this position of affairs, Napoleon gave his directions for the operations of the French armies in Spain, as usual, at a great distance, that is, from Paris. His real policy at this conjuncture was to endeavour to treat with England, and to restore Ferdinand to his ancestral throne, taking, however, the provinces north of the Ebro as an indemnity for France, and perhaps offering Ferdinand the crown of Portugal in exchange. With these objects in view it was of supreme importance to him to have a powerful force in Biscay, Navarre, and the adjoining lands, and to keep his communications with France secure; he did not wish to leave Joseph at Madrid; he was at heart ready to abandon nearly all Spain, could Wellington be held in check on the Portuguese frontier. The Emperor accordingly, in the first days of 1813, ordered that a great change should at once be made in the positions of the invaders in Spain, Suchet alone being left as before in the east. Joseph was to assemble the Army of the Centre around Valladolid, on the line of the communications with France; he was to have only a few thousand men in the capital. The chief part of the Army of Portugal was to fall back from the country it now occupied, and to join hands with the army of Clausel; these united forces were to crush the insurrection in the north; should this be accomplished speedily, as was to be expected, Reille ought to have time enough to return to the upper Douro. Simultaneously the army of Gazan was to march

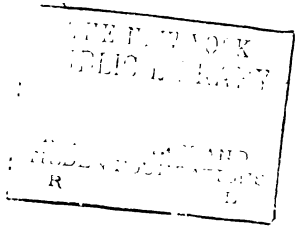
from the upper Tagus to the upper Douro, and to hold Wellington back on that line; it was to maintain an offensive attitude, especially if reinforced by the Army of Portugal.[1] These directions were right enough in principle, in order to give effect to Napoleon's views; but issued as they were far from the theatre of the war, they reached Joseph several weeks late, and when they reached him they were very ill obeyed. The King moved to Valladolid, but too slowly; he left half of the Army of the Centre behind at Segovia; he placed a whole division of Gazan's army in Madrid: evidently he could not endure the thought of quitting the capital. At the same time more than three-fourths of the Army of Portugal were detached to the assistance of Clausel; a mere fraction only remained on the upper Douro, Reille and Clausel were kept employed for weeks in coping with the insurrection in the north; and even in this they were far from successful. As for the army of Gazan, it reached the upper Douro, but in greatly diminished force; and it had hardly any support from the remnants of the Army of Portugal. When the season for military operations had come the French armies, scattered and largely directed northwards, were thus dangerously exposed in the highest degree, should they be attacked by Wellington in force from the western verge of Leon.

The British commander, during these events, had been maturing his deep-laid designs; after the ruin that had befallen the French in Russia, and the

[1] For Napoleon's instructions, see *Corr.*, pp. 433–491, and especially pp. 506–507.

faulty disposition of their armies in Spain, he had good hopes of decisive success in the campaign at hand. The national mind of England had been profoundly stirred by the catastrophe of 1812 and the German rising; the fall of Napoleon seemed imminent; the men of the militia flocked to the army in thousands; Parliament was eager to do anything to further the contest in Spain. As commander-in-chief, too, of the Spanish armies Wellington had obtained additional elements of military strength; he had repaired to Cadiz to meet the Cortes; that Assembly had pledged itself to second his efforts. In the spring of 1813 he disposed of considerably more than 200,000 men; half of this force was composed of Spanish troops, for the most part in the eastern provinces; the other half comprised his British and Portuguese army, from 70,000 to 80,000 fighting men, in the highest state of efficiency for war, and besides some 30,000 Spaniards, better soldiers than most of the levies of their race. Wellington had more than 100,000 men in his hands; he had left nothing undone to make them ready to take the field and to march rapidly over long distances; and he had the support of the bands of the omnipresent guerrillas, of British squadrons commanding the northern seaboard, and of the Sicilian expedition on the coast at the east. He was now distinctly superior to the enemy in force; the plan of his intended operations was grand yet simple. He would fall on the French armies in his front, which certainly would not be as strong as his own; he would turn their positions upon the Douro; he would force

LORD LYNEDOCH.
(After the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence.)



them to retreat before they could unite; he would threaten their communications, perhaps seize them, continually outflanking them on his left, and having, if possible, brought them to bay, he would, if successful, drive them across the Pyrenees. This fine conception was thoroughly carried out, if one or two shortcomings perhaps appear; the possession of the northern seaboard, of which he was assured, would obviously facilitate the great outflanking movement.

Wellington had his preparations made in the last days of April; his operations had begun by the middle of May. He marched with some 90,000 men; his left wing, about 40,000 strong, under Graham, a lieutenant, who had distinguished himself at Salamanca and on other fields, had advanced through the difficult country of the Trasos Montes; his task was to cross the Esla, in the first instance, and to join the main army on the upper Douro. Wellington's centre and right wing numbered some 50,000 men; his object was to effect the passage of the upper Douro, turning the defences of the French on the river, and attacking the enemy should he resist; the British chief, besides, disposed of a motley force of guerrillas and of Spanish troops and levies, perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 strong, which, moving along the northern coast, was to co-operate, if required, in the outflanking movement. Wellington left his headquarters in the third week of May; "Farewell, Portugal," it is said he exclaimed, so confident was he of decisive success in Spain. By the 26th of May he was at Salamanca with his centre; Hill, with the

right wing, was at Alba, upon the Tormes; a French division fell back after a mere show of resistance; the chief part of the army was thus approaching the Douro. But Graham, at the head of the left wing, had been delayed by accidents; he was not over the Esla until the 1st of June; Wellington had been compelled to pause for some days, and had even thought it necessary to see Graham. Such are the difficulties of widely divided movements, as a rule not to be commended in war, but perfectly to be justified in the present instance. The British commander crossed the Douro on the 3rd of June; had Graham joined him, as had been arranged, in the last days of May, the weak forces of the French upon the Douro would have been completely surprised and in part destroyed, nay, Joseph might have been involved in an immense disaster.[1] But the success already obtained had been great, the line of the upper Douro had been seized; the positions which the enemy held on the river, and which had been fortified at different points, had been turned or forced almost without a shot being fired; the detachment of the Army of Portugal and the army of Gazan, weakened as it had been, had no choice but to retreat before greatly superior forces; writers seem to be in error who have maintained that the French could have made a stand on the Douro. Wellington made a halt at Toro on the river for two days; we perhaps see here again his characteristic slowness in making the most of probable success; he might, it

[1] Napier is emphatic on this point. See *History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 194, Routledge Edition.

has been said, have come up with and routed the enemy.[1] His army, however, had marched a great distance, and it was necessary to have it well in hand; it has been justly remarked that "it was prudent to gather well to a head first, and the general combinations had been so profoundly made that the evil day for the French was only deferred."[2]

Meanwhile Joseph, possibly given a brief respite had been endeavouring to retrieve his mistakes, and to concentrate his forces around Valladolid. The division left at Madrid rejoined the army of Gazan; the Army of the Centre was assembled at Valladolid; the Army of Portugal, partly reinforced, fell back in order to draw near its supports. In the first days of June the three armies were around Valladolid, or near that city; the army of Gazan beyond Tordesillas; the Army of the Centre at Valladolid; the Army of Portugal, that is, only a part of it, between Medina Rio Seco and Palencia northwards. Joseph had now more than 50,000 men in hand; but the greater part of the Army of Portugal and the whole army of Clausel were far away in the north; in fact, Clausel had reached Pampeluna and the coast, making efforts to crush the guerrilla rising; from 40,000 to 50,000 men were thus at a great distance from the main army; Wellington was approaching in irresistible force; Joseph is not to be blamed for deciding to retreat. But here two capital mistakes were made, most discreditable to Jourdan,

[1] Napier, *History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 194.
[2] *Ibid.*

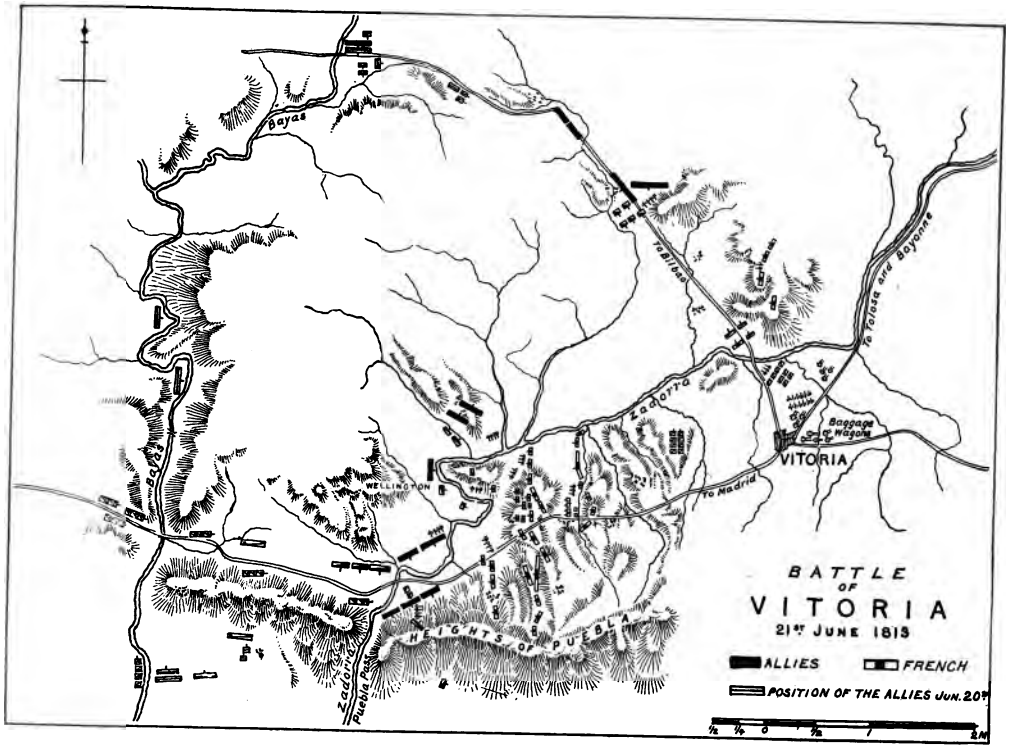
the chief of Joseph's staff, who at this conjuncture showed a want of capacity unworthy of the former victor of Fleurus. The impedimenta of the French were enormous: siege guns, the material of the garrison of Madrid, all that belonged to a fugitive but once brilliant Court, and hundreds of non-combatant men and women; these incumbrances should at once have been sent forward; they were allowed to follow in the track of the retiring army. Again, there were numerous positions on the line of march, for the most part at the heads of the Douro, which could have been made excellent points of defence; it was of supreme importance to occupy these and to retard the advance of the enemy as much as possible, especially as time would thus be afforded to the largest part of the Army of Portugal and to the forces under Clausel to join Joseph; a real general could certainly have taken advantage of these, perhaps even have found an opportunity to strike with effect. But no operations of this kind were thought of; the only idea was to fall back on Burgos, on the line of the communications with France; this was pusillanimous, nay, contemptible strategy.

The French armies, now forming a united mass, reached Burgos on the 9th and the 10th of June; Joseph had sent messages to Clausel and Reille to come into line with him as quickly as possible; this was apparently all that occupied the troubled mind of the King. Wellington pursued, but rather cautiously, as was his wont; he had expected that the enemy would make a stand on the Carrion and the Pisuerga, affluents of the upper Douro; he had pre-

pared himself for a trial of strength. But no use was made of these and other positions; slight demonstrations of resistance were, indeed, attempted; but these were fruitless displays and came to nothing. Reille and a part of the Army of Portugal had now joined the King; but a part was still at a distance under Foy, and Clausel was only advancing through Navarre; from 25,000 to 30,000 men were thus still far away from the principal army. Joseph evacuated Burgos on the 13th, but he was now at the head of more than 60,000 good troops elated by the news of Lutzen and Bautzen; it is pitiable to reflect that he simply continued to retreat, dragging with him an immense and dangerous burden, and not venturing to defend a single point of vantage. The King, too, and Jourdan marched in a wrong direction: they followed the main line of the communications between Madrid and Bayonne; this exposed them to attack from Wellington's left, and especially to the great outflanking movement which formed part of his original design and which might be extended even from the coast. And, at this crisis, a real commander might possibly have baffled the British General, certainly have secured a large reinforcement to the retreating army. Clausel was reaching Logrono, on Joseph's right; he commanded about fifteen thousand men; there was nothing to prevent the King marching to join him; and perhaps Foy, too, might have been brought into line. But the French leaders pursued their untoward course, passively clinging to their communications and making their way along the main roads to the heads of the Ebro. This was

playing into the hands of Wellington; continuing steadily the outflanking movement, and pressing the enemy's right as he fell back, he rapidly swung round his left wing, and advancing with the mass of his army, he forced his adversaries into Vitoria and the adjoining country where, being not far from the foot of the Pyrenees, it was impossible for them to avoid battle. This grand movement had been seconded by movements from the seaboard, on which the British General had always reckoned.

By the evening of the 19th of June the three bodies of which the King's army was composed were assembled around Vitoria and the adjoining lands; they were huddled together in ill-united masses, disordered after the discreditable retreat. The town rises from a small plain encompassed by hills, which afford favourable positions for defence, the Zadorra, a feeder of the Ebro, runs before its front; the main road to Bayonne and another road to Pampeluna, through the Pyrenees, formed avenues for retreat. The French army was about sixty thousand strong, and as Clausel and Foy were near at hand Joseph might accept a battle with some chances of success,—at least might make the British General pay dear for a victory. But the miserable arrangements which from first to last were made by the French commanders in this campaign were continued up to the latest moment. The accumulation of impedimenta which, in the event of a reverse, would entangle and encumber a retiring army, were collected, for the most part, in and near Vitoria; a fraction only was sent forward and


BATTLE
OF
VITORIA
21st JUNE 1813
ALLIES
FRENCH
POSITION OF THE ALLIES JUN. 20th
½ ¼ 0 ½ 1 2M
Bayas
Bayas
To Bilbao
To Tolosa and Bayonne
Zadorra
Baggage Wagons
VITORIA
To Madrid
WELLINGTON
HEIGHTS OF PUEBLA
Zadorra
Puebla Pass

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away; and this required an escort of two thousand or three thousand men, to this extent weakening the principal force. It was imperative to summon Clausel and Foy to the field, and possibly they might have accomplished this had the orders been transmitted by armed bodies of men; but the task was committed to guides and peasants, who ought never to have been entrusted with such a mission. Above all it was, of course, essential to reconnoitre the ground and to place the army upon good positions; the whole of the 20th might have been employed for this purpose, but nothing of the kind was done or even attempted. No doubt Jourdan was ill and could not mount a horse; but there were excellent officers in the French army; that they neglected this duty it is to be greatly feared was due to their characteristic disputes and jealousies. As the result, the morning of the 21st of June found the French army dispersed and scattered, in a word, unprepared to encounter a well-directed attack. The right wing, about half of the Army of Portugal, under Reille, was, so to speak, in the air; it was beyond the Zadorra and held two of its bridges. The centre and left, led by D'Erlon and Gazan, were at a distance of six or seven miles from Reille, and were separated by the Zadorra from that General; and of the seven bridges on the river, not one was broken, a mistake exceedingly difficult to explain. The position of the French army, in fact, was such that defeat at one point would lead to defeat in all.

Joseph and his chief of the staff had hoped that they

would be given the 21st of June to place their army in a position to fight, and to get ready for the battle now manifestly at hand. They reckoned, however, without their host; Wellington was upon them on the morning of that day, a day of disgrace for the French commanders-in-chief, but not for their brave, if unfortunate, troops. The British General disposed of some 80,000 men, 20,000 of these perhaps being, however, Spaniards; little more than 60,000 were actually engaged. The French must have been 57,000 or 58,000 strong, all good soldiers of a single race; had they been directed with ordinary forethought and care, they might possibly have kept Wellington at bay, certainly have rallied Clausel and Foy and made good their retreat. But everything went wrong with them on this fatal occasion: what ought to have been at least a hard-fought battle ended in a complete and shameful disaster. The attack began by a movement of the Spaniards against the French left; the assailants fell on their enemy advancing through the defiles of Puebla, but Gazan successfully maintained his ground, though he is said to have been wanting in energy and resource. Erelong, however, Hill, crossing the Zadorra on intact bridges, came to the aid of the Spaniards with a considerable force, and gradually bore back the divisions of Gazan; and Wellington, in command of the British centre, having also easily got over the river, attacked D'Erlon with largely superior numbers. The two French generals endeavoured to make a stand on an eminence, which gave them a point of vantage, but they were slowly driven back towards

Vitoria, though their troops fought with the most determined courage. Reille, meanwhile, had been fiercely assailed by Graham; but he defended his position with resolution and skill; the bridges he held were taken and retaken; the fight raged long and furiously, without any marked effect. But the defeat of Gazan and D'Erlon compelled Reille to retreat; he was necessarily involved in the fate of his colleagues, and, isolated as he was, was exposed to a crushing disaster; he drew his brave soldiers across the Zadorra, and kept the road to Pampeluna open, a movement that may have saved the French army from complete destruction. The Army of Portugal and its chief retrieved the honour of France on this calamitous day.

While Reille had been playing this distinguished part, the rest of the French army was being forced back through the passes leading into the plain of Vitoria. The defence was for a time stubborn; positions were held to the last moment; clouds of skirmishers were thrown out to cover the retreat; the fire of the artillery was well sustained and intense. But Gazan and D'Erlon were overmatched; nothing could withstand the irresistible British onset; Wellington advanced upon a flood tide of victory. The last stand was made on heights in front of Vitoria; these were carried after a brave resistance; the allied troops had soon taken possession of the town, driving before them enemies now completely beaten. A terrible spectacle then was seen, a warning to military chiefs who neglect their duty. The immense incumbrances of the defeated army

spread all round; guns, trains, material of war of every kind retarded the flight of the disordered masses; the French were meshed, so to speak, in toils of their own making. Panic fell on the host already breaking up; the terrified artillerymen abandoned their pieces, the infantry and cavalry, mingled together, sped onwards in precipitate rout. The spoil taken by the victors was prodigious; out of one hundred and fifty guns the French carried off but two; the treasure-chest of Joseph and the plunder of a devastated kingdom were speedily captured. Jourdan lost his staff, and the King his papers. Vitoria and the surrounding plain was covered with swarms of non-combatants, fine ladies and gentlemen, camp-followers, and a multitude of the degraded of their sex. The great road to Bayonne had been seized by Wellington; Joseph, with the remains of his army, was very fortunate in escaping along the road to Pampeluna, from whence he got through the Pyrenees passes. Meanwhile, Foy and Clausel had not joined the King, and for some time were in the gravest danger. Foy, however, succeeded in crossing the frontier; Clausel was nearly caught by the enemy in pursuit, but ultimately made good his way into France through the pass of Jaca, having thought of marching on Saragossa and rallying Suchet. The French armies, which a few weeks before had been assembled around Madrid, and which, had they been rationally led, would have tasked Wellington's powers to the utmost, had been driven out of Spain in dishonourable rout. Of Vitoria, indeed, Napier has truly written: "Never was an army

more hardly used by a commander, and never was a victory more complete."[1]

Napoleon was not unnaturally incensed at the ruin which had befallen his arms in Spain, and at the flagrant misconduct which had led to Vitoria. "It is time to have done with imbeciles," he angrily wrote; he deprived Joseph of his command, and made him a prisoner in all but the name; he sent off Soult, "the only military head in Spain," to try to repair disasters beyond remedy. The Peninsula had now been set free from its French invaders, except where Suchet was isolated in the east, and a few garrisons held fortresses on the verge of the Pyrenees. The mighty efforts which the Emperor had made to achieve what he thought would be an easy conquest had failed after a struggle of five years; the armies which had entered Lisbon, Madrid, and Seville had been defeated and at last disgraced; Salamanca and Vitoria had followed Baylen; the power of the Empire had been sapped and its renown marred; the Peninsula had been well-nigh as fatal as Russia. This succession of reverses had been partly due to the energy of the ubiquitous Spanish rising, even to the efforts of the Spanish armies in the field; it was largely due to the faulty operations of the French, and to the jealousy and the disputes of their chiefs, nay, to the mistakes made by Napoleon himself, in attempting to direct war from a distance, conduct certain to lead to defeat and disaster, which strategic genius can in no sense justify. But beyond question a principal cause had been the capacity and the

[1] *History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 206, Routledge Edition.

profound insight of the British commander, who had from the first seen how the invaders of the Peninsula could be withstood with success, and had marked the vulnerable heel of the Imperial Achilles; who, undismayed by the colossal forces of the Lord of the Continent, had resolutely stood on the verge of Portugal, and had stemmed the torrent of French conquest; who had gradually formed an invincible army, composed though it was of different races; who in military and civil affairs had shown the greatest wisdom; who with admirable perseverance and skill had defeated his adversaries over and over again; and who, finally, had in a magnificent passage of war driven an army hardly inferior in real strength to his own from the frontier of Portugal across the Pyrenees. Turning to the special events of 1813 in Spain, their most striking feature is the weakness and want of judgment seen in the conduct of the leaders of the French army; we are here reminded of the Soubises and Cleymonts of the Seven Years' War. No doubt Napoleon may have been in fault in his direction of the Army of Portugal, in the first instance, though this is by no means certain; but this cannot excuse the miserable retreat to Vitoria, and the enormous mistakes made before the battle. Yet these considerations do not in the slightest degree lessen the admiration that is justly due to the grand plan of operations formed by Wellington, and carried out to the end with complete success. If once or twice he possibly might have done more, if he was characteristically cautious rather than daring, the preparations he made for the campaign, his march to

the Esla and the Douro, and the movements by which he forced his enemy to fight at Vitoria, and struck him down in a decisive battle, rank high among the fine operations of war.

Vitoria and the expulsion of the invaders from Spain confirmed the Allies in a purpose still not perhaps fixed; the weight of Wellington in the balance of Fortune was great. The interview between Napoleon and Metternich, in which the terms of Austria were treated with scorn, had been held before the intelligence had arrived of the ruin in the Peninsula of the Emperor's power; but Austria had soon openly thrown in her lot with Prussia and the Czar; the Coalition thenceforward had probably resolved on war; it would hardly have made the peace which had been offered before. The Congress of Prague was a mere phantom. The Allies made preparations on a gigantic scale; they had nearly 700,000 men under arms; the League was more formidable than any which France had encountered from the days of Louis XIV. to the existing time. The vassals, too, of the Confederation of the Rhine, though they sent their contingents to their still-dreaded lord, knew that their own subjects were rising against him; new and strange enemies were crossing Napoleon's path: Moreau and Bernadotte had appeared in the allied camp; Murat, infirm of purpose, was thinking, perhaps, of treason. And not only the material, but the moral forces, which tell with such potent effect in war, were being thrown into the scale against France and the Emperor. The resolve of great races, held down but not subdued, to throw off the detested

yoke of a conqueror, the intense desire to avenge the wrongs of years, now stirring all the Teutonic peoples, sustained the cause of the League in Europe. On the opposite side was a great military genius, indeed, and the pride and the energy of a famous nation, but of a nation tired of despotic rule and well-nigh exhausted. The ultimate result of such a conflict could be hardly doubtful; but Napoleon cared little for these things; he had greatly increased and strengthened his immature army; he was at the head of half a million of men; he held the fortresses of Germany from the Rhine to the Vistula. Astride on the Elbe from the Bohemian hills to Hamburg, as in former years he had been astride on the Adige, he was confident that he could defy his enemies. A gleam of victory was to shine on his arms; but the contest of 1813 was to end at Leipzig.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM THE PYRENEES TO THE GARONNE

Wellington made a Field Marshal and Duque di Vitoria—Soult reorganises the French army—Battles of the Pyrenees—Siege of San Sebastian—Fall of the place—The Campaign of 1813 in Germany—Complete defeat of Napoleon at Leipzig—The French armies driven across the Rhine—Wellington crosses the Bidassoa—Soult fortifies his lines on the Nivelle—The lines forced—Soult had previously called on Suchet to support him—Soult at Bayonne—His formidable position—Wellington crosses the Nive—Danger of this operation—The allied army divided on the river—Soult concentrates his forces and attacks it—Indecisive battles of the 10th and 13th of December—Hostilities in the field resumed in February, 1814—Difficulties of Soult and Wellington—Wellington attacks Soult—Passage of the Adour—Battle of Orthes—Retreat of Soult to Toulouse—Rising against Napoleon at Bordeaux—Pursuit of Wellington—Fall of Napoleon—Battle of Toulouse—End of the War.

FOR his triumph at Vitoria Wellington received the staff of a Field Marshal of England, an honour that had been in abeyance for nearly half a century. The Spanish Government, too, made him Duque di Vitoria; the renown of his achievements had become so great that it was seriously proposed to place him at the head of the allied armies about to contend with

Napoleon on the Elbe. He had driven Joseph in rout out of Spain; it has been said that he might have crossed the Pyrenees and destroyed the shattered wrecks of the French armies before they could be ready again to appear in the field. This view, however, is no doubt erroneous, even if, as a rule, he was slow in following up success. The allied army had lost more than 5000 men at Vitoria; in fact, the loss of the enemy in killed and wounded had not been much greater; and the country swarmed with thousands of disbanded troops, gorged with the plunder strewn over the scene of the battle, and rioting in all kinds of excess. Wellington complained of this conduct in indignant language, exaggerated, perhaps, as after the retreat from Burgos[1]; but time was required to restore discipline; the army was hardly able to move. Besides, he could not, at this juncture, have loosed his hold on Spain and begun what would have been a premature invasion of France. The fortress of San Sebastian on the coast, where the frontiers of France and Spain approach each other from the west, was still held by a French garrison; it was absolutely necessary to reduce this before the Bidassoa, the river on the border, could be passed. The fortress, too, of Pampeluna, in Navarre, was still in the hands of the enemy; it was connected with

[1] *Selection*, p. 706: "I am quite convinced that we have now out of our ranks double the amount of our loss in battle, and that we have lost more men in the pursuit than the enemy have. . . . This is the consequence of the state of discipline of the British Army." Wellington doubtless was too severe; but a British army has perhaps always shown a tendency to get out of hand, whether in victory or in defeat.

MAP
OF PART OF THE
PYRENEES
TO ILLUSTRATE THE
CAMPAIGN OF 1813
SCALE OF MILES
S P A I N
F R A N C E
Atallo
Aribo
Yanzi
Pass of Yanzi
Sarre
Bridge of Amotz
Surade
Ainhoué
Echalar
Bidassoa
Nivelle
Urdax
St Estevan
Maya Pass
Nive
Bidarray
Valley of Estevan
Donna Maria
Maya
Elizondo
Valley of Baston
Ispegui Pass
Lareta Pass
Ayoca
Lanz
Bayonne
Olague
Arola ridge
St JEAN-PIED-DE-PORT
Marcalain
Berriopleno
Estoriba
Sorauren
Zubiri
Altobiscar
Roncesvalles
Villaba
Zabaldica
PAMPELUNA
Ruarte
Fabrico

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San Sebastian by a main road along the Spanish verge of the Pyrenees; this could not be left as a menace on Wellington's flank, should he attempt to force the Pyrenean barrier. But the principal obstacle to the suggested movement was the presence of Suchet in the eastern provinces of Spain, disposing of a well-organised and still powerful army. The Marshal, no doubt, had been held in check by the expedition which had landed from Sicily and by the guerrillas in Aragon and Catalonia; but Murray, the officer who had failed on the Douro, had been forced to raise the siege of Tarragona, and was unable to leave the line of the coast; his operations had been of little use to the British arms. At this very time Suchet might, not improbably, have marched on Saragossa, nay, have attacked Wellington[1]; in any case, as long as he remained in the east of Spain he gravely threatened Wellington's right flank and rear. This circumstance alone forbade a march across the Pyrenees; the British General clearly perceived this, and continued to fear what Suchet might do, though the Marshal, in the events that followed, never ventured to make an offensive movement.

Meantime, Soult, invested with plenary powers,—"Lieutenant-General of the Emperor" was his imposing title,—had been reorganising and restoring the French armies, which had fled through the Pyrenees after Vitoria. He had been joined by Clausel and Foy; he had obtained a small reinforcement of

[1] Napier disliked Suchet, for he would not co-operate with Napier's friend, Soult. But the historian is right, here.—*History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 230.

conscripts; he had replaced from Bayonne the artillery lost in the battle; he disposed erelong of nearly 78,000 men; he had united his forces into a single army under three subordinates, D'Erlon, Reille, and Clausel. In about a month he was ready to take the field; he was to engage in a protracted contest with Wellington, of which the issue was long doubtful, and in which, though he was at last worsted, he gave proof of no ordinary powers. A few words must be said as regards this eminent soldier. Soult had a true eye to the great combinations of war; as a strategist he was far-seeing and profound; without the inspiration of Napoleon, he was one of the best of the master's disciples. He had also much tenacity and firmness of purpose; he could stubbornly play to the last a losing game in war; he could prepare and array an army with remarkable skill. But he did not possess the divine gift of genius; as a tactician in battle he does not rank high; as a commander we see two distinct faults in him: in action he was often backward and remiss; he was apt to fail in carrying out effectively well-conceived designs. Napoleon and Wellington concurred in their estimate of Soult: "he was excellent in council," the Emperor said, "but in execution feeble"[1]; "he knew how to place his troops in the field," was his adversary's remark, "but he did not know how to make the best use of them." The career of the Marshal in Spain had not been brilliant; it had been marked by his characteristic faults; but he had distinguished himself on many fields of fame; his struggle with

[1] Gourgaud, ii., 424.

SIR GEORGE MURRAY.
(After the painting by H. W. Pickersgill.)

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Wellington was to add to his renown as a warrior, though he had not the tactical genius of the British commander, nor yet his admirable insight and readiness in the actual shock of battle. It must, however, be said, in justice to Soult, that his antagonist was usually superior in force, and commanded an army excelling in every quality that makes a truly formidable instrument of war. The British soldiery —and the Portuguese were now nearly their equals— always terrible in a trial of strength for their murderous fire and their undaunted steadiness—this was the reason that the column could not stand before the line—had by this time got rid of most of the encumbrances of the past; they were not inferior to their foes in manœuvring skill[1]; they had a great leader and excellent lesser chiefs; above all, a series of victories had given them that moral power, worth, it has been truly said, "three times more than mere physical force." "The Peninsular army," in Wellington's language, "could now go anywhere and do anything"; for its size it was unquestionably the best of European armies. The French soldiery, on the other hand, if brave as their race, and with its aptitude for war, were depressed by the memories of incessant defeats; they were at heart afraid of their enemies, and spellbound by them; they could still fight well, but seldom could make a resolute stand; they had become to a certain extent demoralised, and this was especially the case with their officers.

[1] "L'armée anglais-portugaise," Napoleon has remarked (*Com.*, xxxii., 369), "etait devenue aussi manœuvrière que l'armée française."

They were, in a word, no longer the men of Jena and Austerlitz, nay, of Busaco and Fuentes d'Onoro. It should be added that the army of Soult contained bad foreign elements in its ranks, and was, by degrees, crowded with comparatively worthless conscripts.

Having made a spirited and stirring address to his troops, in which their late chiefs were severely condemned, Soult resolved to assume a daring offensive. His position gave him a great strategic advantage. The French army extended along the northern verge of the Pyrenees; it had the command of good lateral roads, connecting the passes into the range and facilitating movements in that direction; it held the fortress of St. Jéan Pied de Port, which screened its operations to a certain extent. The army of Wellington, on the other hand, though it controlled the main road from San Sebastian to Pampeluna, had very inferior lateral roads, spreading, as it was, on the southern edge of the mountains; this made the communication between its separate parts difficult, and exposed these to a concentrated attack in force.[1] Wellington, moreover, though superior to Soult in numbers—he was at the head of perhaps 100,000 men—had blockaded Pampeluna, at one extremity of his line, and was laying siege, on the other, to San Sebastian; the double operation, which he acknowledged was a mistake,—he may have underrated the organising power of his foe,—engaged a very considerable part of his army; and his right wing was certainly too weak, and lay open to a bold

[1] See *Selection*, p. 720.

and resolute stroke. Soult availed himself with remarkable skill of the favourable situation this presented to him. Leaving only small detachments in his rear, he massed together the forces of Reille and Clausel, from 35,000 to 40,000 strong, and moving rapidly through the famous pass of Roncesvalles, he advanced against Wellington's feeble right, while D'Erlon, at the head of nearly 20,000 men, pushed onward through the pass of Maya against the allied centre. All went auspiciously with the Marshal at first; on the 25th of July he bore back with 30,000 men the brigades opposed to him not 10,000 strong; D'Erlon thrust aside or defeated part of the forces of Hill, inflicting a loss that was severely felt. But at this point the shortcomings of Soult were seen; he halted on the 26th and made no use of his success; he almost halted again on the 27th, awaiting, probably, the approach of D'Erlon, whose movements had been unaccountably slow.[1] These hesitations gave Wellington just sufficient time to reinforce his gravely imperilled wing, though he remained considerably inferior in force; he was attacked on the 28th by his adversary at Sorauren, almost within sight of Pampeluna; but the advantage gained by the Marshal had been well-nigh lost. The French fell on with determined valour, but they had to assail and carry a strong position; the result was what had

[1] I cannot credit the statement of Napier that Soult's inaction on the 27th was caused by his having heard shouts announcing the presence of Wellington. In a conversation at St. Helena, related by Gourgaud, Napoleon declared that "Soult ought to have overwhelmed Wellington on the 25th." This criticism is exaggerated, but has some truth in it.—Gourgaud, ii., 416.

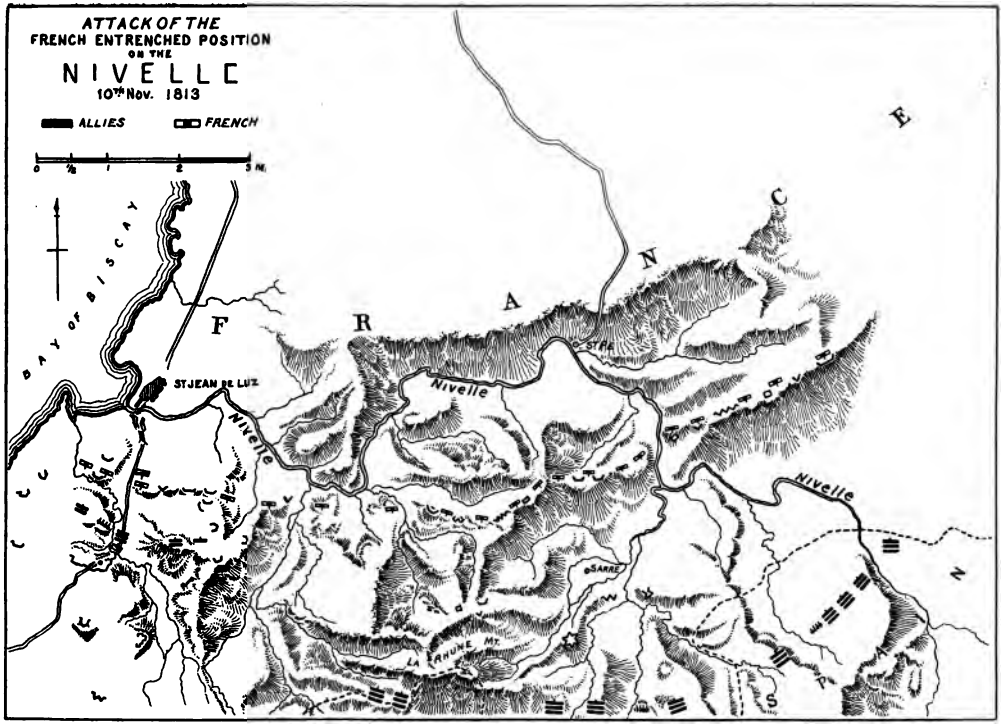
been seen at Busaco; after hours of "bludgeon work," as was Wellington's phrase, the army of Soult, practically beaten, gave up the contest.

On the 29th of July not a shot was fired; the hostile armies maintained the ground they held, but Wellington's right had been much strengthened; D'Erlon, with eighteen thousand men, had at last come into line with his chief. Soult had still a superiority of force; but he had learned a lesson from the battle of the 28th, which his lieutenants had urged him not to fight; he did not venture upon another engagement; he formed a new combination worthy of a very able strategist. Hill, defeated on the 25th, was drawing near Wellington; but he was isolated and still a long way off; Soult resolved to fall on him, and to sweep him out of his path, while Wellington, still at Sorauren, was to be held in check. Should Hill be overwhelmed, as there was reason to expect, the Marshal might destroy some of his enemies along the hills and, above all, might be able to reach the main road from Pampeluna to San Sebastian, to advance by it and to raise the siege of that fortress. Taking, therefore, D'Erlon and some of his own troops with him, and leaving Reille and Clausel with the mass of the army, before Wellington, Soult attacked Hill on the 30th with very superior forces; he succeeded in turning the British General's left, and all but reached his great object, the main road, which might become an avenue to no ordinary success. But Hill made a tenacious defence, disputing every inch of the ground; he fell back to another position; the progress of the Mar-

shal was thus arrested; meanwhile Wellington had struck a terrible stroke, which at once frustrated all his opponent's projects. Relying on his tactical power and on the ascendency his troops had gained, the British chief attacked Reille and Clausel on the 30th; he endeavoured to turn both their flanks, and at the same time he assailed their front; a point of vantage was won on the extreme French right; this was the prelude to complete success. In this second battle of Sorauren, as it has been called, Soult's men did not give proof of their wonted courage; they felt the effects of the reverse of two days before; they gave way along the whole line; the division of Foy was cut off from the beaten army. This sudden disaster placed the Marshal in the gravest danger; he was exposed to a twofold attack by Wellington and Hill; but he ably extricated himself, if with enormous loss. Rallying his shattered divisions as best he could, he threaded the pass of Dona Maria on his right, and thence he made good his retreat to the frontier, having only once attempted to run the risk of a stand. He had certainly been hardly treated by Fortune; he had no reason to suppose that his lieutenants would be easily beaten; they were in considerable force and held a strong position. But Soult's operations from first to last revealed his merits and defects in war; he could plan well, but in carrying out his plans was not good; this was most perilous when in the presence of such a man as Wellington. D'Erlon, too, was greatly to blame for his delays; had he pushed forward on the 26th and the 27th, the issue of the

conflict might have been very different. As regards the British commander, he made a strategic mistake in attacking two fortresses at the same time, and in leaving his right well-nigh uncovered; it was well he had not Napoleon before him; as it was, his position was made difficult in the extreme. But his counter-stroke on the 30th was in his best manner, if undoubtedly he owed much to his invincible troops. The losses of Soult in this interesting passage of arms was from twelve thousand to thirteen thousand men, those of Wellington less than eight thousand, and victory had once more abandoned the eagles.

After the battles of the Pyrenees, as they have been named, Soult took a strong position in front of Bayonne, holding the range of hills along the Nivelle, a stream parallel to the Nive and the Adour, but keeping possession of St. Jean Pied de Port. His adversary, taught by recent experience, entrenched the passes leading into the mountain range and placed his army in a better situation for defence; there were no operations in the field for some weeks. The British commander now turned to the siege of San Sebastian, which had been for some time an object of attack; as has been said, it was essential to master the place before the borders of France could be crossed. San Sebastian was not a great stronghold in itself, but its position and the peculiarities of the ground made it very difficult to besiege and reduce; and it was defended by an able commandant and a devoted garrison. The fortress stands on an isthmus projecting into the Bay of Biscay; it is


ATTACK OF THE
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10th Nov. 1813
ALLIES
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LA RHUNE MT.
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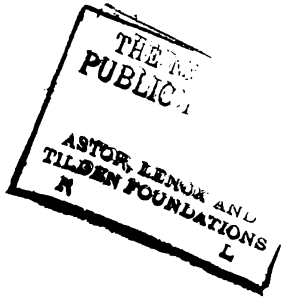
S P A I N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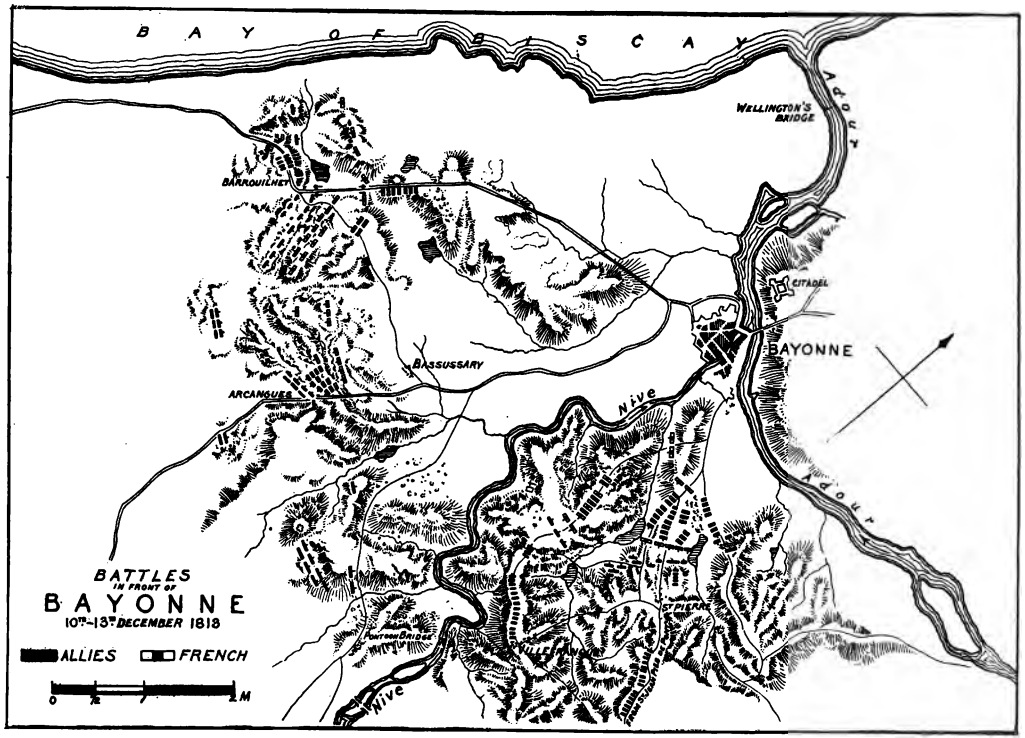
covered to the north by a river called the Urumcea, and to the south by a creek, an inlet of the Bay; on the west it is commanded by a steep hill, crowned at this time by an old castle; the only easy approach to it is by a rising ground from the east. The fortifications were not imposing; but they comprised a succession of outer and inner works which formed a kind of fourfold barrier; the hill and the castle were points of vantage; an enemy advancing to assault the place would be dangerously exposed to the garrison's efforts. Two of the outworks were carried on the 17th of July; but an assault on the breaches which had been made on the northern front was successfully repulsed on the 25th, the day when Soult forced the Pyrenean passes. The siege was now suspended for more than three weeks, for a sufficient battering train had not arrived from England; Graham, who commanded the besieging force, though at the head of ten thousand men, not to refer to a covering army, was compelled to remain well-nigh wholly inactive. This respite gave the defenders—they were less than three thousand strong—an opportunity turned to the best advantage by their skilful chief, Rey; some reinforcements came in from the Bay, not intercepted by the British cruisers; the breaches were re-trenched and made difficult to force; batteries were constructed at different points; works, where injured, were carefully repaired; a great mine was laid along the spaces, where the besiegers, it was foreseen, would make the assault; San Sebastian, in a word, was immensely strengthened. The battering train had reached its

destination on the 19th of August; for twelve days a tempest of shot and shell, directed from sand-hills, called the Chofres, beyond the Urumcea, ravaged the place with its stern work of destruction. But the defences of San Sebastian were by no means ruined; redoubts, a hornwork, and batteries remained intact; a general assault was ordered for the 31st; but the storming columns advanced between the river and the walls, exposing their flank to the fire of the enemy. They were struck down in hundreds before the breaches were attained: had not the great mine been exploded at the wrong moment the assault, it is believed, would have failed. The stormers, however, were supported by a body of Portuguese, who crossed the Urumcea at the very nick of time; the breaches were at last carried, after a desperate struggle; the result was partly due to a mere accident. The castle on the hill held out for some days; it was surrendered on the 9th of September; San Sebastian had been defended for nearly ten weeks. As in the case of other assaulted places in that age, the excesses of the victors were, unhappily, great.

Soult made an effort to relieve San Sebastian; he crossed the Bidassoa, but not in force; the attempt was tentative, and came to nothing. The belligerent armies returned to their former positions along either side of the Pyrenees to the west; no important movements were made for a month. Here Wellington's inaction has again been censured; but sound military reasons explain his conduct. He had to form a new base before he invaded France, and to procure supplies on the seaboard of Biscay; his ad-


BAY OF BISCAY
WELLINGTON'S BRIDGE
Adour
BARROUILHET
CITADEL
BAYONNE
BASSUSSARY
ARCANGUES
Nive
Adour
ST PIERRE
PONTOON BRIDGE
Nive
BATTLES
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vance from Portugal had been unexpectedly rapid; he was in need of requirements of all kinds for his troops. Besides, faction at Lisbon had raised its head against him; the Spanish Government had been incensed by exaggerated reports as to the excesses of his men; it indulged in angry and noisy threats; it was weakened by intestine discord. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the issue of the contest in Germany was still doubtful; Napoleon held his commanding position on the Elbe. Wellington well knew what the great warrior was; he had little faith in the operations of his foes. Should the Emperor win a decisive battle on the plains of Saxony, he would be able to reinforce his Spanish armies; he retained many of the fortresses in the East; Soult and Suchet, if largely strengthened, might make it go hard with the British commander. And even if no great additions were made to their forces, the position of Suchet in the east of Spain was a dangerous menace, and Pampeluna had not yet fallen. Lord William Bentinck had superseded Murray; but his operations and those of the Spanish armies in Aragon and Catalonia, were of little use, he had been defeated at Ordal, beyond the lower Ebro. Suchet was superior in real strength in the eastern provinces; he had advanced into Catalonia towards the frontier, leaving garrisons in several fortresses in his rear; if he was now far distant from Wellington's flank, it was possible for him to join hands with Soult,—this very movement we shall see was proposed; the united forces of the two marshals would, in that event, be formidable in the

extreme. Wellington, therefore, wished to dispose of Suchet before venturing into France: he even contemplated operations against the Marshal; from a military point of view he was fully justified.

While Wellington and Soult were thus watching each other, ruin was befalling Napoleon and his arms in Germany. When the Emperor rejected the terms of the Allies, which would have left him with hardly diminished power, he was confident that he would overwhelm his enemies, and be once more the undisputed Lord of the Continent. But he had wholly underrated the strength of the material and moral forces arrayed against him: he disposed, no doubt, of half a million of men; but his army was filled with rude levies and discontented foreigners; the Allies had 700,000 men in their ranks; the Prussian army was 150,000 strong, not 40,000, as he had supposed; all Germany from the Niemen to the Rhine was burning to rush to arms, and to avenge itself on its French oppressors. And if his position on the Elbe was imposing, it was weaker than his position on the Adige in 1796–7; the long line of the great river could be more easily turned, his communications with France were insecure, regard being had to the German rising. Napoleon, too, from his centre on the Elbe, had thrown out secondary armies in many directions, in order partly to strike down Prussia, which he rightly judged was his bitterest enemy, and partly to stretch a hand to the large garrisons he still had on the Oder and the Vistula: this greatly weakened his principal army and exposed his lieutenants to dangerous attack. He had, in a

word, aimed at and grasped too much: scientific and grand as his strategy was, it had made the situation critical for him: had he fallen back to the Rhine in 1813 he could have successfully defied the Coalition's efforts. Genius in war, nevertheless, for a time triumphed: the Emperor won a great battle at Dresden; and but for the disaster of Vandamme at Culm, the trembling scales of fortune might have inclined towards France. But the Allies, acting on a preconcerted plan, the credit of which belongs to Moreau, and avoiding the strokes of the adversary they feared, fell on his secondary armies one after the other: Macdonald was defeated on the Katzbach; Oudinot met the same fate within sight of Berlin; Ney was routed with terrible effect at Dennewitz; the losses of the Emperor were enormous; he was compelled to change the plan of his campaign. He marched down the Elbe hoping to seize Berlin, and to crush Prussia in a decisive trial of strength; but Blücher had successfully crossed the river; Schwartzenberg was on the march to join Blücher; Bavaria suddenly declared for the Allies; Jerome's kingdom of Westphalia disappeared; Napoleon had no other choice but to abandon his design. He retreated on Leipzig, where the greatly superior forces of the League of Europe were closing around him; a great battle of two days followed: on the first the advantage remained with the French; on the second they were distinctly worsted, partly owing to the defection of the Saxon contingent. The defeated army was now driven out of Leipzig; the destruction of a bridge on the Elster caused the

loss of many thousands of men; the retreat was marked by scenes of horror and despair, like those which had attended the retreat from Moscow. A gleam shone on the Emperor's arms, as his fugitive host toiled onwards to the Main: the Bavarian, Wrede, was defeated at Hanau, but this was the flicker of the expiring lamp. The Grand Army which a few weeks before had seemed to defy attack on the Elbe had been destroyed as a military force; a mere wreck only sought refuge behind the Rhine: the French garrisons in Germany had been lost to their country.

At the instance of the Allies and of the British Ministry, Wellington had entered France a few days before Leipzig. His military object was to seize Fuentarabia, as a base of supplies; he was still not inclined to invade the country, in face of the difficulties to which he remained exposed. His operations were successful and brilliant: he deceived his adversary as to the true point of attack, as he had deceived him before upon the Douro; he crossed the Bidassoa by fords near its mouth, and drove back Soult's right with largely superior numbers. Nearly at the same time he carried a height called the Great Rhune, just outside the main positions of the French; the resistance was for some hours stern, but the British General turned the mountain by the left, and had erelong compelled the enemy to retreat. But as yet he had only reached the edge of the ground of vantage held by Soult, a range of eminences, we have seen, along the Nivelle, before the important fortress of Bayonne. The Marshal had fortified

this position with skill and care; it bristled with redoubts and entrenchments; a double series of lines protected the heights; these have been compared to the famous lines of Torres Vedras. But there was an essential distinction between the two cases: Soult's lines were hastily constructed in face of the enemy; he commanded a brave, but a defeated army; and Wellington, unlike Massena, was victorious and had a superiority of force. The Marshal endeavoured to find other means to defend the menaced territory of France, nay, to place his antagonist in real straits; he formed a combination worthy of his strategic powers. Suchet was in Catalonia and could dispose of thirty thousand men, veteran soldiers of an excellent quality; Soult entreated him to cross the frontier, to advance through Roussillon, and to join hands with him around Tarbès and Pau; the united armies, fully ninety thousand strong, would then break into Spain through the pass of Jaca, and fall on the flank and rear of Wellington; should they defeat the British chief in a great battle, they would perhaps drive him back as far as the Douro. It was a fine project, and it proves how Wellington was right in being apprehensive as to the position of Suchet, though it may be doubted if the two French armies could have made good their way, with their artillery, through the narrow pass of Jaca, especially as the winter was at hand. But as Suchet would not operate by himself against Wellington, he now refused to accede to Soult's counsels; a real opportunity may have been lost; the French commanders, as so often had been

the case before, did not agree with each other and would not act in concert.[1]

Pampeluna had fallen on the 31st of October; a danger on Wellington's right flank had thus been removed. Leipzig had, by this time, closed the campaign in Germany; the British chief was again urged to invade France. For the reasons, however, already given, he was still indisposed to an operation of this kind; the weather, too, had been exceedingly bad, and the Spaniards in his camp had hardly any supplies. He resolved, in the first days of November, to storm Soult's fortified lines; the result, if partly due to other not unimportant causes, was a fine example of his admirable *coup d'œil*, and of his remarkable tactical power, but also of his adversary's defects on a field of battle. The lines to be assailed extended on a front from Ainhoue on the French left to the right on the sea; they formed, we have seen, a strong twofold barrier; they were held by D'Erlon, Clausel, and Reille, with probably 50,000 men. But Foy stood, on the far left, with a large detachment, intended to threaten an offensive movement; in the events that followed he was almost out of the conflict. Wellington's army was divided into three main bodies, Hill on the right, Beresford holding the centre—that General had been called up from Portugal; Sir John Hope was in command on the

[1] Soult, before this time, had urged Suchet to attack or to threaten Wellington's right flank. The plan of a combined operation is fully explained in Napier's *Peninsular War*, iii., 310–314. Napier, however, is always on the side of Soult when he refers to another French colleague. Good judges have thought Soult's plan very hazardous, nay, impracticable.

left; it numbered some 74,000 men. Soult, reckoning Foy, had perhaps 60,000. The attack began on the 10th of November; a hill, called the Lesser Rhune, and the intervening space to the bridge of Amotz, upon the Nivelle, formed the vulnerable point in the Marshal's lines; Wellington perceived this with characteristic insight; Hill and Beresford were directed to master the point; their combined forces, more than 40,000 strong, bore back and defeated D'Erlon, who had not more than 15,000 men. Clausel made an obstinate defence at the centre, but the weakest part of his front was held by a brigade only; this was attacked by at least 8000 men; he was erelong driven from the positions he held. Meanwhile Foy had been kept in check by a small body of men, and Reille, on Soult's right, with 25,000 troops, was paralysed by Hope with a very inferior force. The masterly dispositions of the British chief had thus brought overwhelming numbers against the French left and centre; the lines were carried along this space; the first line of the defence was untenable and was soon abandoned. Soult, on the contrary, had arrayed his army badly; Foy, practically, was kept out of the battle; Reille was unable to turn his divisions to account; the Marshal made no real attempt to improve his position. On the second line of the defence little resistance was made; the twofold obstacle was carried with comparatively little loss. The issue was mainly due to the ability and the resource of Wellington. It is fair, nevertheless, to Soult to remark that his soldiery were disheartened by the rout of Leipzig,

and did not make the stand that might have been expected from them.[1]

Notwithstanding the delays which had been laid to his charge, the British General had invaded France many months before the Allies. Soult was much disconcerted by the carrying of his lines; he appears to have believed that they were impregnable; but he was a tenacious and determined soldier; he fell back on the fortress of Bayonne, and entrenched himself again in a strong position. Bayonne was only a place of the third order, but its situation makes it a point of vantage for defence if a commander knows how to turn the adjoining ground to account. It is placed on the confluence of the Adour and the Nive, both large rivers, especially in the floods of winter; the tract around it is divided by the Nive, which separates it into two parts; the lands in its front are scarcely practicable for troops in a rainy season. Having strengthened his position by inundations and field works, Soult arrayed his army before Bayonne, extending it on both sides of the Nive; D'Erlon was on the left, with Foy on the extreme left; Clausel held the centre, Reille the right. The Marshal had still nearly 60,000 men, but some of these were Germans, and there were a number of conscripts. Wellington placed his army nearly in front of Soult, but occupied only one side of the

[1] Napier's comments on this battle, *History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 340, 341, are very discriminating and just. He clearly points out how Wellington brought largely superior forces to the decisive points, and how Soult failed to defend them. "Against such a thunderbolt of war," he remarks, "there was no defence in the French ranks."

Nive; Hill was on the right, Beresford in the centre, Hope on the left; the troops were confined to the space between the Nive and the coast, and held a somewhat narrow and contracted front. The army, however, nearly 100,000 strong, was very superior to that of the enemy. The British General would have quickly fallen on Soult but for unexpected difficulties that crossed his purpose. The Spaniards in his camp, having entered France, gave a free rein to excesses of all kinds. Wellington had no choice but to make severe examples; he actually sent the great body of these troops across the frontier, retaining only one or two divisions, and necessarily weakening to some extent his forces. He also dreaded a rising of the population around him; he rightly described it as a martial race. He issued a proclamation, pledging himself to respect persons and property, and to pay for supplies; and this had an admirable effect on the neighbouring peasantry, who, as a rule, did not stir from their homes. These wise arrangements, characteristic of a chief intolerant of license and stern in discipline, but essentially humane, like most British officers, and having their ingrained respect for order and law, contributed largely to his ultimate success; but some time passed before they were complete. It should be added that the lowlands in front of Bayonne were turned into swamps by incessant rains; this circumstance alone retarded the intended attack.

By the first week of December Wellington had his arrangements made; he resolved to cross to the side of the Nive he had not yet occupied. His

object was to hem in Soult in Bayonne; to intercept the supplies of his enemy, and especially to cut him off from St. Jean Pied de Port, and to separate him from the Pyrenean passes. But the attempt was to be made in the face of an able chief, in possession of a fortress and a central position, which gave him shorter lines on the whole scene of action: even if successful it would make two parts of the allied army, with a broad river, not easy to cross, between them. The movement began on the 9th of December: Hope made a demonstration against Soult's right, and held Reille, though superior in force, in check: meantime, Beresford and Hill, meeting but little resistance, crossed the Nive at the two points of Ustaritz and Cambo, and established themselves, in force, in the positions they had won. The Marshal had, in fact, been surprised by a bold, rapid, and well-conceived attack; his adversary had seized the northern bank of the Nive: so far, he had completely gained his object. But Wellington's army was now divided on a wide stream; the operation, skilfully carried out as it was, was in the abstract, at least, a strategic mistake, to be justified only by the ascendency his troops had attained; Soult seized the opportunity presented to him. Availing himself of the screen which his entrenchments and Bayonne gave him, and holding the chord of the arc on which his enemy stood, the French chief assembled his whole army on the southern bank of the Nive: he concentrated nearly sixty thousand against thirty thousand men: he attacked Wellington on the 10th of December. The British General, as in July, was

in no doubtful peril; had Soult fallen in full strength on the allied centre, he would have found only a single division in his path: he must have gained, possibly, a signal victory. But the Marshal, from some unknown reason, sent Reille with all his forces against Hope, that is, against the left of his foe,—a badly conceived, almost an eccentric movement,—and Reille, after a fierce struggle at a place called Barrouilet, was repulsed. Meanwhile the division in the centre had held its ground, though attacked by Clausel with superior numbers: but it could hardly have maintained its position with success, had not Soult unexpectedly given up the attack. Wellington, from the opposite side of the Nive, had ferried large detachments across the river; these, though still distant, threatened Soult's left flank: Clausel was directed by his superior to retreat from the heights of Bussussary, which he had nearly won. Once more the faults of the French commander appeared; a demonstration, for it was little more, made him abandon a prospect of real success: besides, he had not chosen the true point of attack, and had not overwhelmed his enemy's centre; Reille, too, had been moved in the wrong direction. The French army fell back on Bayonne: the fine project of its chief had, in its execution, failed.

Two German regiments, after this hard-fought combat, followed the example of the Saxons at Leipzig, and went over to Wellington's camp. But the French commander was not dismayed: he knew the advantage of his central position: he resolved to seize another opportunity to attack. On the 11th

and 12th of December skirmishes only took place; but on the night of the 12th a flood in the Nive swept away a bridge by which the Allies had crossed; Hill remained isolated on the northern bank; he had not more than 14,000 men in hand. Soult had been defiling his army through Bayonne; on the 13th he fell, with 35,000 men, on Hill: the odds were immensely in the Marshal's favour, if not so decisive as might be supposed. The advance of the French was upon a narrow front, and by roads made almost impassable; Soult was unable to bring more than 20,000 men into action. The assailants, nevertheless, had much the better of the fight for some hours: their artillery played from a height with deadly effect; Hill's centre at St. Pierre was very nearly broken: two English colonels, afterwards disgraced, abandoned their positions and drew their men out of fire. Victory seemed at last in the Marshal's grasp: he pushed forward part of his reserve; he prepared himself for a final effort; in this instance he tried to strike hard, and home. But three regiments, two British, one Portuguese, continued to make a fierce resistance: a sudden panic fell on the advancing enemy, caused, it has been said, by a mistaken order to retreat; at the very crisis of the fight Soult's columns came to a stand,[1] and failed to make use of the advantage they had gained. Hill was gradually rein-

[1] Napier's *History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 354, significantly remarks: "Yet the battle seemed hopeless, for Ashworth was badly wounded, his line was shattered to atoms and Barnes, who had not quitted the field for his former hurt, was shot through the body."

forced to a certain extent: and ultimately Soult gave up the contest. But Hill for a time was in the greatest danger[1]; it was conspicuously made apparent, how hazardous it is to have an army divided upon a wide river, in front of a concentrated enemy, especially if he commands a fortress.

Soult retreated into Bayonne after this indecisive battle; he did not venture to make another attack; he devoted some time to restoring his weakened army and to strengthening his position around the fortress. Wellington remained in possession of both banks of the Nive; he continued to carry out his purpose, that is, to keep his adversary within Bayonne, to isolate him, to cut off his supplies, and to separate him from Spain, and even from the plains of Gascony. The Marshal eluded these operations with skill and resource; he left a considerable garrison in Bayonne, but he succeeded in maintaining his communications with the adjoining country, and he held his army in readiness to march to the upper Garonne, where he still hoped to join hands with Suchet, who was about to abandon Catalonia and to cross the frontier. Hostilities, however, were nearly suspended for about two months; a winter of extreme severity prevented operations in the field, and the movements of the British chief had rightly been made to depend on the general invasion of France

[1] Napier, *History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 355, points this out. "The Allies could not, unsuccoured, have sustained a fresh assault." Soult, except perhaps at Orthes, was never so near victory as on this occasion: of his operations as a whole Napier says, iii., 356, "The French general's plan was conceived with genius, but the execution offers a great contrast to the conception."

by the League of Europe. Meanwhile the Empire of Napoleon was menaced on every side with ruin; Murat had abandoned his benefactor and joined the Allies; Holland and even Belgium were in revolt; the hosts of the Coalition were upon the Rhine; France, exhausted by her efforts in 1813, seemed utterly unable to prolong the war; a movement against her ruler had begun; discontent agitated the terrified bodies of the State. The situation appeared desperate, but the great master of war did not give up hope; he left nothing undone to restore his shattered military power, and though he listened, perhaps sincerely, to overtures for peace, he prepared to contend for Italy and the France of the natural boundaries. These events profoundly affected the position of Soult; the Marshal was being cast on a stormy sea of troubles; large drafts from his best troops were made by the Emperor; his army was reduced to some 40,000 men; increasing numbers of these were mere conscripts. But this was not all, or nearly all; his soldiery, accustomed to licence in Spain, preyed on the country and stirred up the population against them; he was short of requirements necessary to take the field; parts of the south of France were breaking away from the Empire; a rising in behalf of the fallen Bourbons was being planned at Bordeaux. But the difficulties, too, of Wellington were great, even at a conjuncture when the war seemed coming to an end. The admirable arrangements he had made to preserve discipline and to defray all the charges of his army had, no doubt, kept the French peas-

antry quiet; they were, indeed, better disposed to his troops than to those of their own countrymen. But his Spanish auxiliaries were still given to excesses—a large number of these had been recalled; the Regency, as it was named, of Portugal continued to refuse him the aid he required; the Spanish Cortes had not ceased to be angry and jealous. A most important incident, besides, had occurred, which the British commander regarded with just apprehensions. Napoleon had made a treaty with his captive, Ferdinand; had acknowledged him as king, and had sent him back into Spain. Wellington feared that the Cortes might confirm this compact, and actually wrote to the Government at home that a war with Spain was by no means impossible.

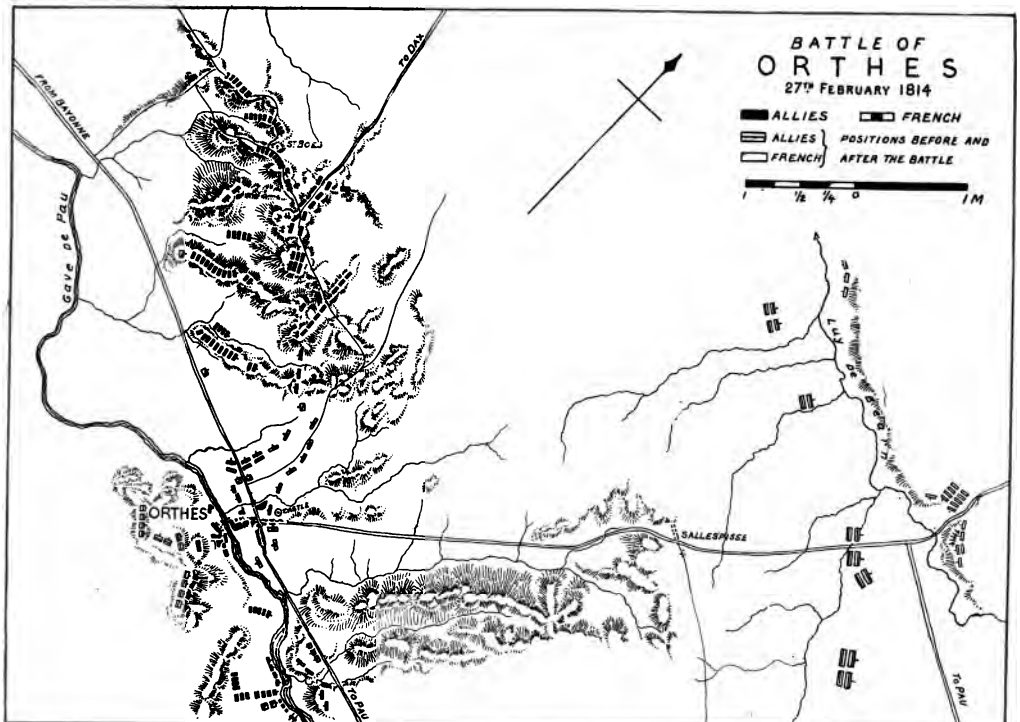
This danger, however, was soon dispelled; the Cortes refused to have anything to do with Ferdinand, and Wellington's position was in other respects improved. The campaign opened in the middle of February, 1814, the frost having congealed the roads and made operations practicable in a difficult country. The British chief was still at the head of about 100,000 men; but of these 25,000 perhaps were Spaniards, a part on the other side of the Pyrenees; exclusive of the garrison of Bayonne, which seems to have been rather too large—this at least was the judgment of Napoleon. Soult, we have seen, was not more than 40,000 strong, and thousands of his troops were rude levies. The intention of Wellington was to attack Soult, whose army extended from the eastern verge of Bayonne,

along the Bidouze, an affluent of the Adour, and also along the Gave of Oleron, the local name of a mountain torrent; and at the same time to cross the Adour at its mouth, to invest it, and, if possible, to reduce Bayonne. Both operations were attended with success, if this was not as complete as Wellington could have wished. Soult's lieutenants were driven from their positions to the Gave of Pau, a stream parallel to the Gave of Oleron; St. Jean Pied de Port was besieged by a Spanish division. The Marshal was finally cut off from the Pyrenean passes and forced farther into the interior of France; his army, however, had suffered little loss; he made ready for another trial of strength before undertaking his march to the Garonne, which he had had in contemplation for some time. Meanwhile the allied army had effected the passage of the Adour; the operation was conducted with daring and skill; a bridge of boats was thrown across the river; a flotilla seconded the crossing from the sea; a kind of causeway was made of small coasting vessels. The garrison offered but little resistance; the French, it has been said, were terrified by the British rockets, a missile as yet little known in the warfare of that age. The fortress was now besieged by Hope, but it held out until the close of the war; the siege, too, occupied a large part of Wellington's forces; in fact, he failed here to attain his object; he had hoped to master Bayonne, to penetrate into France, and to find a better theatre on which to contend with his enemy.

Meanwhile Soult, falling back behind the Gave of Pau, had assembled some forty thousand men,—

seven thousand of these, however, were conscripts,—in a formidable position, round the little town of Orthes. His right, under Reille, was protected by marshy ground and held the hamlet of St. Boes and the adjoining heights, sloping down towards the village of Baights; his centre, commanded by D'Erlon, was covered by an eminence,—the Marshal took his stand on this in the battle that followed,—by a ravine and by a swampy flat; his left, with Clausel at its head, held Orthes and its fine bridge, the only one on the Gave that had been left unbroken. Both the flanks and the front of Soult were thus extremely strong and very difficult to reach and attack; he was behind a river, besides, which the enemy must cross. Wellington had approached the position by the 25th of February; having reconnoitred the ground with care, he made preparations rather, as he believed, to dislodge his adversary from his points of vantage than to fight a strongly contested pitched battle. The British General was not quite forty thousand strong: making every allowance for detachments and the siege of Bayonne, it appears strange that he had not assembled a more powerful force against his able opponent. His right, under Hill, was before Orthes and Clausel; his centre and left under Picton and Beresford, confronted D'Erlon and Reille, and Soult's centre and right. At daybreak on the 27th Picton and Beresford crossed the Gave; the Marshal, it is said, thought of attacking them when in the act of passing; but he preferred to maintain his attitude of defence, and to accept a battle, which gave him

good hope of success. Hill remained on the other side of the river, and there was a wide space between his two colleagues; Wellington's army was thus not favourably placed to fall on an enemy in a position of remarkable strength. The advanced posts of the French were soon driven in; but the battle raged furiously for at least three hours around the village of St. Boes and its heights; the troops of the defence had long a distinct advantage. The men of Beresford and Picton, still rather far apart, endeavoured in vain to turn the enemy's right, and to force his centre; they were repulsed over and over again, as they struggled through the obstacles in their way, and sought to close with the skilfully posted French; they were ravaged by a destructive fire of guns and of musketry. Soult, it is said, as he beheld what seemed a certain defeat, smote his thigh and exclaimed, "I have him at last"; he marshalled his reserves to make victory complete. But Wellington had watched the battle from a hill on his side; his tactical inspiration turned the scales of fortune. Perceiving that St. Boes and the height could not be carried, he contrived by a movement of characteristic skill, to turn this part of the position to the left; the result was before long developed: safety, nay, success, was admirably plucked from danger. The French army gave way by degrees: its commander had no choice but to retreat. Meanwhile Hill had effected the passage of the Gave; Clausel fell back to join his discomfited chief. The retreat was conducted in good order; but thousands of conscripts disbanded and threw away their arms.


BATTLE OF
ORTHES
27th FEBRUARY 1814
ALLIES
FRENCH
ALLIES
FRENCH
POSITIONS BEFORE AND
AFTER THE BATTLE
1
½
¼
0
1M
FROM BAYONNE
TO DAX
Gave de Pau
ORTHES
SALLESPISSES
TO PAU
TO PAU

Soult had ably fought a defensive battle; he had only just missed a real victory; but probably he should have fallen on his antagonist when crossing the Gave: here, again, we see his shortcomings in the field. On the other hand, Wellington's strategy can hardly be admired; but his genius in tactics shone out finely; his movement to turn the hill at St. Boes was a master stroke.[1] The Marshal had lost four thousand men at Orthes; besides, perhaps, half of his boyish conscripts; but he rose superior to fortune, however adverse; he made ready to march to the Garonne, where he still hoped to be joined by Suchet. The retrograde movement was across the heads of the streams which descend from the Pyrenees, through a difficult and intricate country; it was effected with admirable skill and resource; it was in no sense a mere passive retreat. Soult made a stand at Tarbès on the upper Adour, and successfully held his adversary at bay: more than once he assumed a daring offensive; meanwhile he reorganised his defeated troops, restored their confidence in some degree, endeavoured to stir up a partisan warfare, and obtained reinforcements, though for the most part conscripts. And these fine operations were carried out at a time when the Empire was crashing down in ruin, and when a large part of the south of France was declaring against it; this retreat of Soult, in fact, may be fitly compared to the remarkable retreat of Chanzy to Lemans, a striking episode in the great war of 1870. Wellington followed the

[1] Napier, *History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 419, has very clearly described the characteristics of the contending generals at Orthes.

Marshal cautiously and at a distance; he was apprehensive of the strength of Suchet, who, he assumed, would come into line with Soult; his army was being reduced by large detachments to guard his lengthened communications and his rear; and he sent off Beresford, with twelve thousand men, to Bordeaux, where the Duc D'Angoulême and many leading citizens had organised a rising against Napoleon, and had raised the white flag of the House of Bourbon. It may be doubted if this was a wise step in a mere military sense; but it was of the first importance to second a movement, which was extending itself throughout Gascony: it should be added that Wellington gave proof of his characteristic prudence; he refused to recognise the Bourbons without the consent of his Government, though he did not conceal his sympathies with them. All this made his operations slow, as was often the case with him when following a retiring enemy, and he found it necessary to call up large reinforcements to his army as it advanced eastwards. Meanwhile Soult had reached Toulouse, the chief town of Languedoc, in the last days of March; he had gained a considerable start on his enemy; he had reached his position on the Garonne.[1]

During the course of these events in the south of France, Napoleon's Empire was toppling down in ruin. By the first days of January, 1814, the armies of the embattled Continent had crossed the Rhine:

[1] For an excellent criticism of these operations of Wellington and Soult, see Napier's *Peninsular War*, iii., 435–436. The historian blames the slowness of Wellington's pursuit.

they extended on a great arc from the confluence of the Moselle to the verge of Switzerland. The rapidity of the invasion had surprised the Emperor; he had not had time to restore his forces; France, exhausted and discontented, gave him little support: he had not more than 80,000 or 100,000 beaten troops to oppose to 300,000 of the Allies. After La Rothière his position appeared desperate; this would have been the case had his adversaries followed the principles of war. But Blücher and Schwartzenberg, the chiefs of the hosts of the League, men of different natures and not disposed to agree, divided their armies on the Marne and the Seine; Napoleon struck in between them, with marvellous power and skill, opposing a single front of defence to a double front of attack, he defeated them over and over again; Vauchamps, Montmirail, and Montereau recalled the exploits of 1796–7. The Allies actually sued for an armistice; had the Emperor at this juncture been satisfied with contending only for the France of the Rhine, the struggle perhaps would have turned in his favour. But he was still bent on retaining a great part of his Empire, especially Belgium and the prize of Antwerp; he did not concentrate all his forces and recall Eugene Beauharnais from across the Alps: this, in a military sense, was a real fault in his magnificent operations in 1814. Nevertheless his genius shone grandly out for a time; Blücher advanced rashly again, as he had advanced before; he was nearly caught and destroyed at Soissons; but the old Prussian chief would not acknowledge defeat; Napoleon met a reverse at

Laon, followed by another at Arcis sur Aube, when he turned to manœuvre against Schwartzenberg. Still, notwithstanding this partial success, the Allies, despite their overwhelming numbers, had really not accomplished much; they had been outgeneralled in every respect; Wellington, with a relatively small army, had been of more weight in the scales of fortune. The British General has, in fact, maintained that their mighty enemy might have tired them out had he continued to operate as before[1]: but the Emperor adopted a different course, grand in conception, but in the result fatal. He fell back towards the Rhine in order to rally his garrisons in Lorraine, to call up Eugene from Italy and Augereau from Lyons; with their united forces—and they would be very great—he intended to strike the communications and the rear of his foes, to defeat them, and to drive them out of France. This movement, however, uncovered Paris; opinion in the capital was turning against the war; the Allies marched on and seized the seat of the Empire; the effect was decisive and complete. After a short resistance

[1] These comments of Wellington on Napoleon's operations in 1814 are very interesting, especially as Waterloo was soon to be fought. They are in the Greville *Memoirs*, i., 73, ed. 1888. "Bonaparte's last campaign, before the capture of Paris, was very brilliant, probably the ablest of all his performances. . . . Had he possessed greater patience he would have succeeded in compelling the Allies to retreat. . . . The march upon Paris entirely disconcerted him and finished the war. The Allies could not have maintained themselves much longer, and had he continued to keep his force concentrated and to carry it as occasion required against one or the other of the two armies . . . he must eventually have forced them to retreat."

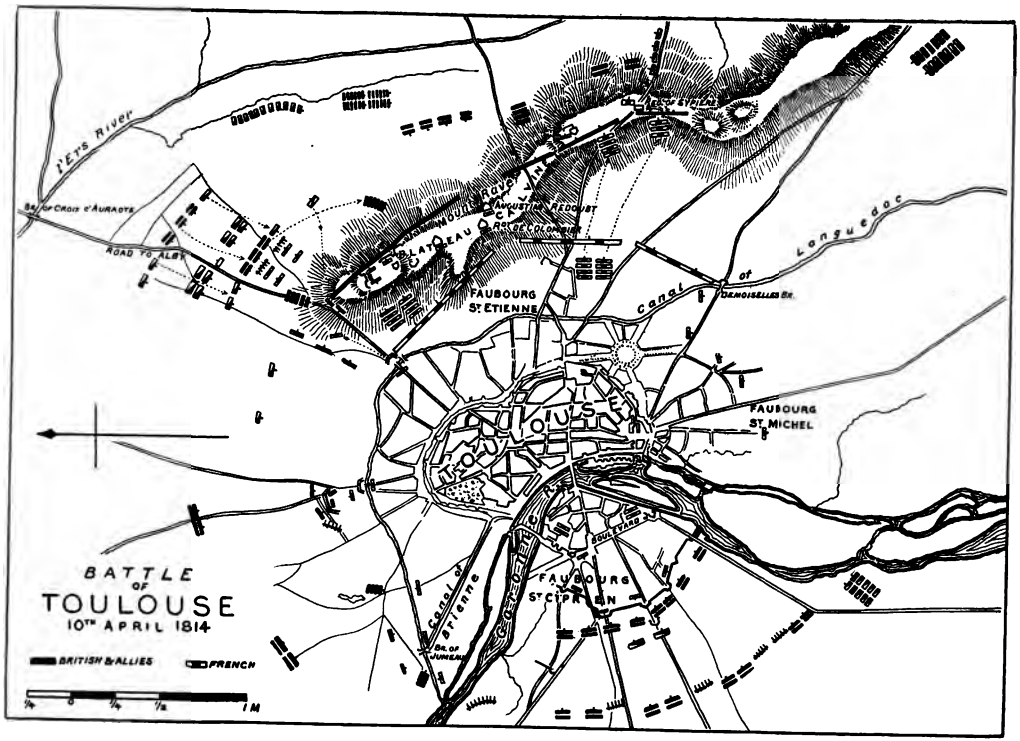
Paris opened her gates: the Monarchy of the Bourbons was proclaimed restored: Napoleon, abandoned by his companions in arms, but still idolised by his devoted soldiery, signed his abdication on the 6th of April, 1814.

Meanwhile Wellington and Soult had been girding up their loins for a trial of strength around Toulouse. The Marshal had given orders to place the city in a state of defence, before he had approached its walls; his orders had been carefully obeyed. Suchet was still in Roussillon when his colleague reached Toulouse; his army had been reduced to 12,000 men; he continued to turn a deaf ear to Soult's counsels. That chief was thus practically left to his own resources; his arrangements were made with conspicuous ability and skill. He had still about 38,000 men, for he had been, we have said, reinforced on his march: his first care was to secure his communications with the adjoining country,—he hoped against hope to join Suchet; his next was to take a formidable position for a defensive battle. Toulouse gave him most favourable opportunities for this: he turned them to the very best advantage. The city is divided by the Garonne, a deep and broad river: on its southern bank the suburb of St. Cyprien stands; this, surrounded by a loop of the Garonne, could be made well-nigh impregnable to attack. The canal of Languedoc covers the place on the northern bank—not to speak of its ancient enceinte; outside rises the eminence of Mont Rave, crowned by a tableland able to contain an army; beyond, the Ers, an affluent of the

Garonne, flows; an enemy would have to cross this should he attack Mont Rave, the Ers being at hand, and directly in his rear. Soult chose his ground with remarkable skill; his object was to compel the British chief to attack him on the tableland of Mont Rave; in that case he would have to make a long flank march exposed to the onset of the French columns, and with a river behind him, imperilling his retreat. The Marshal placed Reille and his troops in St. Cyprien, which had been made a post of very great strength; he had a small detachment outside the city to observe the line of his retreat, in the event of a reverse. But D'Erlon and Clausel had the mass of their forces accumulated along Mont Rave and the tableland, the point, Soult correctly judged, that his adversary would be obliged to attack. Wellington did not refuse a just meed of praise to his very able foe: "In the whole of my experience," he wrote many years afterwards, "I never saw an army so strongly posted as that of the French at the battle of Toulouse."[1]

The start gained upon Wellington by his opponent had enabled the Marshal, not only to choose his position, but to strengthen Mont Rave and the tableland with redoubts and field works. The British General was now in command of 52,000 men, 9000, however, being Spaniards; he resolved to attack Soult and to drive him out of Toulouse. On the 28th of March he tried to cross the Garonne above the city; but the river was in flood and the materials for a bridge too scanty; he was obliged to cross

[1] Sir H. Maxwell, *Life of Wellington*, i., 371.


BATTLE OF TOULOUSE
10TH APRIL 1814
BRITISH & ALLIES
FRENCH
1/4 0 1/4 1/2 1 M
l'Ets River
Br. of Croix d'Auraote
ROAD TO ALBY
Mount Rave
BLATEAU
AUGUSTIN REDOUBT
Rt. DE COLOMBIER
FAUBOURG St. ETIENNE
Canal of Languedoc
DEMOISELLES Br.
FAUBOURG St. MICHEL
TOULOUSE
BOULEVARD
FAUBOURG St. CYPRIEN
Canal of Brienne
Br. of Jumeau

lower down at a place called Grenade. The bridge was destroyed by the force of the current; Beresford was isolated, without support, for two whole days; Soult has been severely blamed for not attacking him when in these straits; but Grenade is fifteen miles from Toulouse; it is difficult to say that an opportunity was missed. Wellington had his dispositions made by the 9th of April; Hill was to threaten, and, if there was a chance, to attack St. Cyprien; Picton, on the left, was to assist Hill; the main attack, directed by Wellington himself, with Beresford and the Spaniards, was to be on Mont Rave and the tableland. The assailants, therefore, were extended along a broad arc, of which the defenders held the chord, an advantage in itself of no little importance; and the British General, as his adversary had foreseen, had been compelled to make his principal effort under conditions in the highest degree adverse.

The battle began at an early hour on the 10th; for a long time victory inclined to the French; they might have won it had they had a more daring commander. Picton made a rash movement which cost him dear; Hill's attempt to storm St. Cyprien completely failed; Reille was able to detach largely to the assistance of his chief. Meanwhile Freyre and his Spaniards, and Beresford with his British troops, had crossed the Ers by the one bridge that had been left intact, and had begun making their perilous flank march, through miry, broken, and difficult ground, against Mont Rave and the tableland, exposed at all points to the destructive fire of the

enemy. The Spaniards were unable to stand the ordeal; their ranks gave way and became a horde of fugitives; Beresford's soldiery, though they toiled steadily on, were stricken down in hundreds by the French guns and musketry. As the formidable position of Soult was reached, the assailants were not more than 10,000 strong, blown, too, and exhausted by their most trying march. Soult might have fallen on them with nearly 20,000 fresh troops, strongly supported, and from a point of vantage. But the Marshal's defects in battle were once more made manifest; "he did not employ half the force he might have employed"; he attacked Beresford with a single division only; this was fairly repulsed after a brief struggle. The assailants now redoubled their efforts; nothing could withstand the British infantry's onset; the Spaniards rallied at the spirit-stirring sight; the French were by degrees driven back; Mont Rave and the tableland were won. Soult retreated, but only a short distance; he made ready to fight the next day; his forces were much less than those of his enemy. The battle, however, if indecisive, was a defeat for the French; they had been forced away from a position of extraordinary strength by assailants fighting with all the odds against them for hours. Once again Soult, admirable in conception, had been weak in execution; but the result was largely due to the endurance and the valour of Beresford's men. "I could have done anything with that army," was a remark made by its chief.

Soult retreated from Toulouse, still entreating

Suchet to come into line with him at Carcassonne. The war, however, had now reached its end; the Marshal, it has been said, fought his last great battle in the confidence of assured success, and knowing that peace had already been made. This is an unjust, nay, a shameful charge; it is confuted by a simple comparison of dates. Napoleon's abdication was not ratified until the 11th of April; the engagement took place upon the 10th; Soult could not have heard that hostilities had ceased.

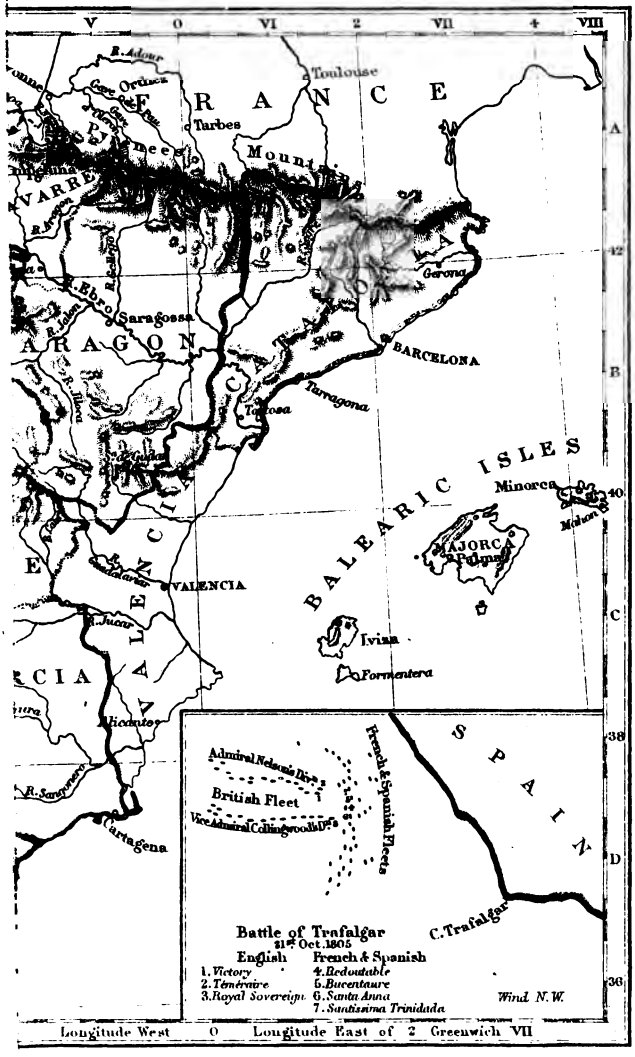
The Peninsular War, in a strict sense, closed with Vitoria and the expulsion of the invaders from Spain. I have endeavoured to describe the great qualities of Wellington in that remarkable contest, to do justice to his antagonists, and to indicate the characteristics of the belligerent armies. I shall not repeat what I have already written. The war along the Pyrenees and in the south of France resolves itself into a duel between Soult and Wellington; it has peculiar interest for a student of the art. The Marshal was a strategist of no mean excellence; some of his combinations were exceedingly fine; he outgeneralled his adversary more than once; he had great tenacity and firmness of purpose. But he was not equal to himself in the shock of battle; his hand, so to speak, could not second his brain[1]; he allowed victory to slip from his grasp; he had not

[1] Napier is very partial to Soult, but these remarks on the Marshal's strategy before he fought at Toulouse are true (*History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 460): "Soult's combinations were now crowned with success. He had, by means of his fortresses, his battles, the sudden change of his line of operations after Orthes, his rapid retreat from Tarbès, and his clear judgment in fixing upon

the gifts of Condé or of Frederick in the field. In this contest Wellington made strategic mistakes: in fact, strategy was not his strong point in war; but he was infinitely superior to his opponent in tactical power; he directed an army on the ground much better; in a word, he was a much greater commander.[1] It is unnecessary to dwell on the qualities of the contending armies. In 1813 and 1814 the British soldiery—and the Portuguese were hardly inferior—trained for years under a great chief and flushed with repeated success, had acquired a complete ascendency over their disheartened foes, exhibited on almost every occasion. The main historical interest of this passage of arms is that it gives us a measure of what Wellington achieved in the final struggle between Napoleon and Europe. He kept Soult, and even Suchet, confined to a theatre of war outside the great theatre on the Marne and the Seine; had these Marshals been able to join their master, the Allies could never have reached Paris; they would probably have been driven beyond the Rhine.

Toulouse as his next point of resistance, reduced the strength of his adversary to an equality with his own. He had gained seventeen days for preparation, had brought the Allies to deliver battle on ground naturally adapted for defence, and well fortified, where one-third of their force was separated by a great river from the rest."

[1] Napier (*History of the Peninsular War*, iii., 419), comparing Wellington with Soult, remarks: "Wellington possessed in a high degree that daring promptness of action, that faculty of inspiration, . . . with which Napoleon was endowed beyond all mankind. It is this which especially constitutes military genius."



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Admiral Nelson's Div.
British Fleet
Vice Admiral Collingwood's Div.
French & Spanish Fleets
Battle of Trafalgar
21st Oct. 1805
English
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2. Téméraire
3. Royal Sovereign
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CHAPTER IX

THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA—QUATRE BRAS—WATERLOO

Wellington made a Duke in 1814—He is sent as Ambassador to France—His position at the Congress of Vienna—Napoleon's escape from Elba—He regains the throne—Conduct of the Allies—The Hundred Days—Weakness of the Emperor's Government—His military preparations—The allied plan of campaign—Wellington proposes to invade France—Napoleon's plan of campaign—Concentration of the French army on the Belgian frontier—The operations of June 15, 1815—Napoleon fails to attain fully his objects, but gains a distinct advantage—Blücher hastily advances to encounter Napoleon with only part of his forces—Delays of Wellington—The battle of Ligny—The D'Erlon incident—Blücher is defeated, but not destroyed—The Battle of Quatre Bras—Misconduct of Ney on the 16th of June—Tactics of Wellington—Napoleon and the French army on the 17th of June—Immense opportunity given the Emperor—Grouchy is detached with a restraining wing—The night of the 17th of June—Operations of the 18th of June—The battle of Waterloo—Fine defence of Wellington—Rout of the French army—Grouchy the real cause of the disaster.

WELL deserved honours were showered on Wellington when he sheathed his victorious sword in 1814. He was raised to the highest rank in the Peerage, and, as in the case of Marlborough, was made a Duke; he was led in

state into the House of Commons, and received its thanks, which he acknowledged in brief, but dignified words; half a million was voted as a reward for his services; he was the most striking figure at a solemn thanksgiving at St. Paul's; peerages were bestowed on three of his best companions in arms. The troubled state of the Continent erelong required his presence on the scene of events, in differents countries. He endeavoured to compose disputes between the Spanish Cortes and Ferdinand, who, having regained the throne, was reviving absolutism and the abuses of the past; his remonstrances and even threats prevailed for the moment. A more difficult mission was then entrusted to him; he was sent as the envoy of England to France, where Louis XVIII., restored by the right of conquest, was already wearing an uneasy crown. With characteristic insight he was not slow in perceiving the mistakes and the vices of the Bourbon régime; his Correspondence abounds in dry comments on these, especially on the weakness of an ill-united Government—"they are ministers," he bitterly said,—"not a ministry"; he predicted before many months had passed that the existing order of things could not endure in France. His position in Paris, however, became dangerous: he stood, indeed, well with the King, and the noblesse of the Court; but the disbanded soldiery and the populace looked askance at him; his life was exposed to the plots of assassins; Lord Liverpool insisted upon his recall to England. Before this time, it may be observed, he had turned his attention to the defence of the Netherlands; he

had surveyed the fortresses on the Belgian frontier; he had marked out "the entrance of the Forest of Soignies" as a favourable position for a great defensive battle, an augury of what was to be seen at Waterloo. Wellington replaced Castlereagh during the later scenes of the memorable Assembly which met at Vienna to dispose of the spoils of Napoleon's Empire, and to remodel the map of a transformed Continent. But though his Correspondence clearly shows that he had opinions of his own on the momentous questions which were agitating the European world, he confined himself to carrying out the policy of his chief; he made little or no mark on what took place at Vienna, at least until the very last moment. His sympathies were, on the whole, with a settlement of the Continent which curbed the ambition of France; but he approved of the proposed alliance between Austria, England, and France, to check the pretensions of Prussia and the Czar. Like all the soldiers and statesmen of the Coalition, he had no inkling beforehand of the portentous events which were about to convulse the world again and to lead to the conflict of which the end was Waterloo.

The Congress of Vienna was about to dissolve when it received the intelligence of Napoleon's escape from Elba. This is not the place to examine the reasons that led the fallen Emperor to attempt to recover his throne in defiance of Europe, still armed against him. That he broke faith with the Allies is true, and probably he would have made his wonderful venture in any event: but the Bourbons

and the Allies had broken faith with him: History justly condemns a great deal of their conduct. We may accept Wellington's statement that St. Helena had not been chosen as a place for his banishment; but his forcible deportation had been discussed at Vienna; Marie Louise and his son had been taken from him, by shameful intrigues that cannot bear the light; funds promised him by treaty were wrongfully withheld; plotters, known to Talleyrand, seemed to have aimed at his life. His march from Grenoble to Paris was a triumphal progress; it proved how an immense majority of the French people detested and despised the rule of the Bourbons; the Royal authority disappeared on his way; his advance was that of a mighty influence that nothing could resist. He was at the Tuileries on the 20th of March, 1815; within four weeks he had put petty risings down, without shedding, it may be said, a drop of blood; he had accomplished a Revolution to which no parallel can be found; he was acknowledged from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean as the Sovereign of France. When he first landed on the shores of Provence even his old companions in arms denounced him as an adventurer engaged in a mad enterprise; this, too, was Wellington's decided view; "The King of France," he wrote, "will destroy him without difficulty, and in a short time." As to the leading personages at Vienna, they turned a deaf ear to what they were told for some days; in the phrase of the Corsican Pozzo di Borgo, Napoleon "was a bandit soon to be strung up on a tree." But when it had become

too evident that the great body of the French nation, and that the army, to a man, had rallied around him, they adopted measures without example in the annals of the diplomatic world. Napoleon was proclaimed the outlaw of Europe; it is idle to attempt to qualify the phrase; the overtures he made for peace received no answer; war, deadly and universal, was declared against him. This frantic violence no doubt may be partly excused, if we bear in mind what had been the Emperor's career; but it was mainly due to the animosities and the fears of a League apprehensive of having to disgorge what it had gained; it is significant that even such a man as Wellington fully concurred in what was being done at Vienna. He even signed a treaty which pledged England to join in the crusade against the ruler of France before he had obtained the consent of the Ministry.

The brief and tragical period of the Hundred Days was meanwhile running its momentous course. The Second Empire of Napoleon, from the nature of the case, could not be the absolute and uncontrolled despotism of the First. France had welcomed him with general acclaim as her chief, but the prospect of a tremendous struggle with Europe made large parts of the nation fall away from him, and separated it into discordant factions. The Royalists lifted again their heads; the great Liberal middle class, though it had thrown off the Bourbons, began to regard the Emperor with distrust; the mass of the peasantry had hailed him as a Deliverer, but it dreaded the conscription and the return

of years of fatal war. The stern unanimity of Rome when she confronted Hannibal at a crisis of her fortunes was not seen; the Assembly of the Chambers and the "Acte additionnel," concessions to the prevailing ideas of the hour, showed how France was a house divided against itself, and impaired the authority of the Head of the State. Disappointment, too, had followed illusions; Napoleon, in his advance to the capital, had appealed to revolutionary passions and hopes, but he had no real intention of satisfying these; he would not be, he exclaimed, "the king of a Jacquerie"; besides, for many and obvious reasons, his new-made Government was unstable and essentially weak. He was thrown, in a word, on a sea of troubles, in which the vessel of the State could hardly be steered; nevertheless, his genius of organisation and his administrative powers were never, perhaps, more grandly displayed. He was too clear-sighted not to perceive, from the first, that the League of Europe was bent on war to the death, though he endeavoured for some weeks to obtain peace, and he offered to accept the settlement of the Continent made at Vienna. But when it became manifest that these attempts were hopeless, he addressed himself to the herculean task of contending against a world in arms. His efforts to recreate the military power of France, and to place the nation in a position of defence, were, considering the circumstances of the time, astonishing. The army, which on his return from Elba could not send 50,000 soldiers in the field, was raised by him, within two months, into an active army, nearly 200,-

000 strong, by the middle of June, 1815, and into an auxiliary army of greater numbers; by the autumn the armed strength of the Empire would have approached the enormous total of 800,000 men. At the same time, he contrived to find the means to arm, to equip, and to supply these masses, to a very considerable extent at least. He had begun to fortify Paris and Lyons; he restored the organisation of his field army, distributing it into its old divisions, and giving it again its revered eagles. Napoleon, no doubt, had, at this crisis, vast elements of military force in his hands, in thousands of disbanded soldiers and their trained officers; and the nation, exasperated by the threats of its enemies, at last seconded his exertions with patriotic ardour, and shook off the apathy and the weakness of the year before. But what Napoleon accomplished was not the less wonderful; it even surpassed his achievements of 1813.[1]

While the great warrior was making these gigantic efforts, the Allies were preparing to overwhelm their enemy. Their forces were being assembled from all parts of Europe; 700,000 men were concentrated, in June, 1815, to carry the war from the Scheldt, the Elbe, and the Po, to the Seine. Wellington, the only one of the chiefs of the League who had not felt the terrible hand of Napoleon, had wished to invade France in April with 300,000 men;

[1] It is impossible, in a mere sketch like this, to describe Napoleon's preparations for war in 1815. An admirable and exhaustive account will be found in the "*1815*" of H. Houssaye, ii., 1–83.

his colleagues resolved to follow the general plan of their operations in 1814. Four great armies, advancing from Belgium, from the Rhine, from the Var, and forming a huge semicircle of attack, were to bear down all resistance and to converge on Paris. They could not be arrested by partial defeats; they would stifle the disturber of the world in the capital, and speedily bring the contest to a triumphant close. The situation, as it was thus presented, offered two plans of campaign to Napoleon. The enemies could not reach Paris until the end of July, and then with not more than 450,000 men, for 150,000 would be required to mask the fortresses on their way; they could not reach Lyons until about the same time, and they would not be more than 70,000 strong. In the first case, they would have to deal with Napoleon, at the head of at least 200,000 men, in possession of both banks of the Marne and the Seine, and supported by a fortified city with a powerful garrison; in the second, they would be opposed to Suchet, who, with 30,000 men and the resources of the second town of France, ought to be quite able to hold them in check. This scheme of operation had real promise; if we bear in mind what the Emperor achieved in his wonderful struggle of 1814, it afforded reasonable hopes of ultimate success. But the plan exposed France to a second invasion, and this the nation would not endure; it was certain to quicken the intrigues of faction, to strengthen the Bourbon cause, and to play into the hands of the League. The second plan was, no doubt, more hazardous; but it was in accord with

the true principle of the art of war; it gave scope to Napoleon's strategic genius.

The forces of the Coalition formed a huge front of invasion, extending from the North Sea to the Mediterranean; at the edge of this lay the armies of Blücher and Wellington, spreading over Belgium and near the borders of France. The northern column of the enemies, as it might be called, was thus widely separated from its supports; it was possible suddenly to spring on this, and, when isolated, to defeat it in detail; it would then be practicable to turn against the eastern and southern columns, and to confront them, with many chances of success. Napoleon resolved to adopt this plan, in principle the same as that which led to Marengo and Ulm. The position of the hostile armies in Belgium was most favourable, it should be added, to his audacious venture. They were disseminated on a great space of country; their concentration would necessarily take time; the headquarters of their chiefs were far apart; they were dangerously exposed to an ably directed attack.[1]

The united armies of Blücher and Wellington were about 220,000 men. Napoleon had hoped to fall on them with 150,000; a sudden rising in La Vendée, however, deprived him of from 15,000 to

[1] These operations have been admired by all commentators. Wellington said to Greville (*Memoirs*, i., 40): "Bonaparte's march upon Belgium was the finest thing ever done." Napoleon (*Comment.*, v., 198) has remarked: "Il trouva ainsi dans les secrets de l'art des moyens supplémentaires, qui lui tinrent lieu de 100,000 hommes, qui lui manquaient; ce plan fut conçu et executé avec audace et sagesse."

20,000 good troops; he was only able to assemble 128,000, including 3500 non-combatants; this largely lessened the chances of an advantageous issue. His object was to strike the allied centre at the points where its inner flanks met, and where it would naturally be most weak; to force it, and to compel his antagonists to separate, and to diverge from each other, giving him an opportunity to attack them when apart. The Emperor's first operations were as admirably designed and conducted as any in his extraordinary career. Four *corps d'armée*, their movement skilfully masked, were marched along the edge of the Belgian frontier to the point of junction of the army as a whole; a fifth corps advanced from the Aisne; the Imperial Guard was pushed forward from Paris; on the night of the 14th of June, 1815, 124,000 fighting men were assembled within a few miles of Charleroy under the beard, so to speak, of a hardly suspecting enemy, and directly before a great main road leading from Charleroy to the chief town of Belgium, and traversing the allied centre, the object of attack. Operations began in the early morning of the 15th.[1] The purpose of the Emperor for this day was to catch and destroy the corps of Zieten, one of the four which composed the army of Blücher, and which lay near the Sambre on either side of Charleroy; to hold, as far as possible, the main road in force, and to seize the two strategic points of Quatre Bras and Sombreffe, on the line of the communica-

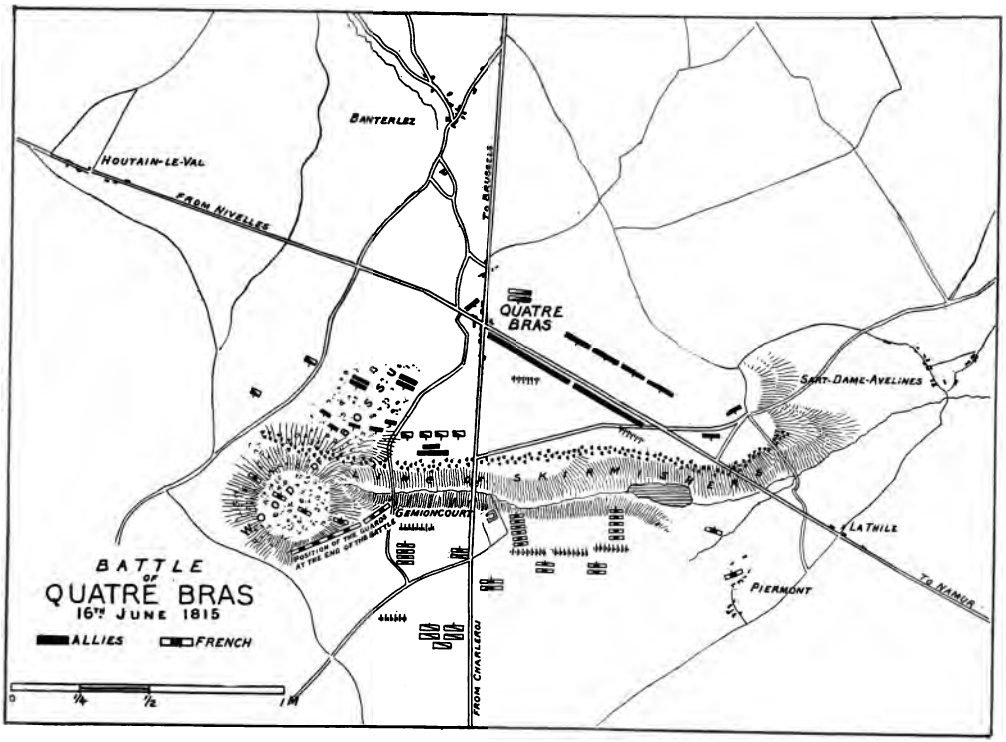
[1] For the objects of Napoleon on the 15th of June, see the authorities collected in my *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 76, 77.

tion of the hostile armies, the occupation of these manifestly being of the very first importance.

The project was one of the finest ever conceived in war, but the accomplishment of it was far from perfect. Napoleon expected to have crossed the Sambre, and to have been master of Charleroy by noon; in that event Zieten could have hardly escaped; the main road would have been occupied for miles; Quatre Bras and Sombreffe would have been in the hands of the French by the afternoon. But hesitations and delays occurred, partly owing to accidents common in war, largely to the timidity and indecision of commanders, who, terrified at the prospect of a contest with Europe, did not second as they ought to have done their great chief. D'Erlon, on the left, a laggard, we have seen in Spain, was very late in reaching the Sambre, and did not advance on the 15th as far as was expected from him. Vandamme, in the centre, was retarded by a mischance. The march of the chief part of the army was checked for some hours. Gérard, too, on the right, had not assembled his whole corps by daybreak; the shameful desertion of the vile traitor Bourmont impeded, to some extent, his advance. Charleroy was thus not attained until the afternoon; even by nightfall a fourth part of the French army still lay on the southern bank of the Sambre. The corps of Zieten, accordingly, escaped with but little loss; one of the objects of Napoleon had not been realised. The invaders, however, had possession of the main road for some distance beyond Charleroy, and Quatre Bras and Sombreffe might, without

difficulty, have been seized. But Ney, who had only received the command of the left of the army at the last moment, would not employ a sufficient force to take Quatre Bras; the point was successfully held by the enemy, through a mere chance. A dispute between Grouchy and Vandamme, in Napoleon's absence, prevented the occupation of Sombreffe.

Napoleon had already gained a great strategic advantage, if his operations on the 15th had been incomplete. He had occupied the main road and gathered near the enemy's centre, as he had calculated, the weakest part of their line; he was within easy reach of Quatre Bras and Sombreffe; he might hope to divide his adversaries, and to beat them in detail. The dispositions of Blücher and Wellington were singularly favourable to this daring offensive movement. The Prussian chief had learned that the French army was near the frontier on the 14th of June; he directed his forces to concentrate on Sombreffe; but only three of his corps could be at that place on the 16th, the corps of Bulow being far away around Liège. Blücher was thus exposing himself to the strokes of Napoleon with no more than a part of a not united army; and he had no certainty of support from Wellington, whose headquarters at Brussels were far from his own at Namur. The conduct of the British commander gave signal proof that he did not excel in strategy, especially when he had to cope with the greatest of strategists. He had been informed, as early as the 10th, that an attack on his positions was, perhaps, imminent; but he left his army as dispersed as it had been before; he


BANTERLEZ
HOUTAIN-LE-VAL
FROM NIVELLES
TO BRUSSELS
QUATRE BRAS
SART-DAME-AVELINES
GEMIONCOURT
LA THILE
PIERMONT
TO NAMUR
FROM CHARLEROI
BATTLE OF QUATRE BRAS
16TH JUNE 1815
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would not believe that the allied centre would be assailed; he left the mass of his forces far on his right, thinking that this was his most vulnerable point, an assumption very difficult to understand. He remained motionless until the 15th; by the afternoon of that day, perhaps at an earlier hour, he was apprised that the allied centre was being threatened; but practically he did nothing to ward off this attack. Towards nightfall he assembled his army; his right was moved in the direction of his left; his reserve was made ready to march from Brussels; but not a regiment was sent to the main road, which was already partly held by Napoleon and would bring the enemy in full force on the allied centre. A wide gap thus divided him from his Prussian colleague; but happily one of his subordinates, perceiving this, moved a single small division to Quatre Bras, which closed the gap to a certain extent,—the distance was not less than fourteen miles,—and so far might retard the advance of the Emperor. Late in the night Wellington gave orders that a large part of his army should march towards Quatre Bras; but these dispositions were hours too late; no great force could reach Quatre Bras on the 16th; the one weak division which held that point could not possibly resist a powerful attack.[1]

[1] For the dispositions of Blücher and Wellington on the 15th of June, acknowledged by all commentators to have been very faulty, see the admirable chapter of Mr. Ropes, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, pp. 70–115. I may refer to my own *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 88–102, and the authorities there cited. The operations of the day on both sides are excellently narrated by H. Houssaye, "*1815*," ii., 109–149.

We may glance at the positions of the belligerent armies on the morning of the 16th of June. Ney, in command of the French left, was at Frasnes, a little village near Quatre Bras, but with a few hundred men only; the other divisions of his army, under Reille and D'Erlon, extended backwards to Gosselies and Jumet, a distance, at the farthest point, of eleven miles. Grouchy, who had received the command of the French right, was, with part of his army, near Fleurus, that is only a short way from Sombreffe; Napoleon, with part of the centre, was around Charleroy; Lobau, Kellermann, and Milhaud were about to cross the Sambre, in all, about 17,000 strong; Gérard, now under Grouchy, had half of his corps still south of the river. On the other side of the field of manœuvre, Blücher was approaching Sombreffe, but with only three-fourths of his army; Wellington was moving on Quatre Bras, but with a force comparatively small. In these circumstances the Emperor has been charged with undue delays; he ought to have advanced against Blücher at once; in that event he could have annihilated the corps of Zieten, not yet supported by the corps of Pirch and Thielmann, and isolated between Fleurus and Sombreffe.[1] If not wholly without foundation, this criticism is far fetched[2]; Napoleon was bound to assem-

[1] The authorities on this subject will be found cited in my *Campaign of 1815*, p. 104.

[2] Napoleon returned to Charleroy on the night of the 15th of June; he was already suffering from the physical decline which affected him in 1815. According to Gourgaud, *Mémoires*, i., 502, the Emperor said he ought to have slept at Fleurus; this may indicate that he thought he should have fallen on Zieten early on the 16th.

ble his army north of the Sambre before encountering enemies nearly double in numbers; anything like a premature movement might have been disastrous. The Emperor, too, from the point of view he took,—and this conformed to true strategic principles,—did not expect that his adversaries would meet him in force on the 16th; close as he now was to the allied centre, he did not suppose that Blücher and Wellington would attempt to approach each other at Sombreffe and Quatre Bras with only a part of their armies; he assumed that they would fall back, as would have been their most prudent course. It is plain from his despatches and those of Soult—the Marshal had been made chief of the French Staff, an unfortunate choice—that he did not think he would be seriously engaged on this day; he believed that he would reach Brussels on the 17th; there was no necessity, therefore, to hasten the advance of his army.[1] These anticipations were, no doubt, false in the event; but what really deserves notice is, that Napoleon's dispositions for the 16th were masterly, and ought to have secured him decisive success. Ney was ordered to march with his army to and beyond Quatre Bras,—a single division was being detached,—and to send another division to a point called Marbais, where it would be on the flank and rear of the Prussians, should Blücher be moving upon Sombreffe. Ney would thus hold Wellington in check and probably beat him, for the Marshal would dispose of more than 40,000 men;

[1] All these considerations are admirably explained by H. Houssaye, "*1815*," ii., 131–134.

and he would be admirably placed to fall on Blücher, should Blücher attempt to give Napoleon battle. At the same time Grouchy and the main army of the Emperor were to march to Sombreffe, and even as far as Gembloux, and to attack Blücher should the opportunity arise.

Had Ney carried out his orders as he might have done, the army of Blücher would have been destroyed; Wellington could hardly have averted a severe defeat; the campaign in Belgium would probably have come to an end. But the Marshal "was not the same man," in Napoleon's phrase; his defection from the Bourbons preyed on his mind; he was distrusted by his master and by the army; he was fighting with a halter around his neck. It is impossible to account otherwise for the timidity, followed by recklessness, of which the ill-fated chief gave such decisive proof in the conflict of 1815. He had been directed, on the 15th of June, to seize Quatre Bras; he had failed to do this through his own fault; but the directions of Napoleon remained unchanged. Ney, therefore, ought to have had his army ready to advance by the early morning of the 16th; but he allowed Reille and D'Erlon to be motionless for hours. He received the Emperor's orders for the 16th in the forenoon; yet he did very little to conform to them; he indeed summoned Reille to Quatre Bras, but very late: he did not send a message to D'Erlon for a considerable time. No doubt Reille hesitated and paused, which he should not have done; but Napoleon was indignant at the Marshal's conduct; he peremptorily ordered him

again to advance to Quatre Bras, and to drive off any enemies he might find in his path. This second order was rather late; but it might have been carried into effect, with consequences of the most momentous kind, had Ney been the daring and energetic warrior of old. The result of this inaction, nay, of disregard of positive commands, was unfortunate for the Emperor in the very highest degree; it frustrated to a great extent his consummate strategy. It was not until two in the afternoon of the 16th that Ney was within reach of Quatre Bras; he had as yet only some 11,000 men in hand; he was confronted by the single division, nearly 8000 strong, which had been sent to Quatre Bras the night before; this sufficed for the moment to arrest the Marshal's advance. His false operations had saved the allies from disaster: and yet even this was not the measure of his errors on the 16th.[1]

Meanwhile Napoleon and the greater part of the main French army had reached Fleurus by noon on the 16th, a short distance from Blücher's point of assembly, Sombreffe. But half of Gérard's corps had not yet come into line and Lobau was only breaking up from Charleroy, that is, was still seven or eight miles away. The Emperor reconnoitred the ground from the roof of a mill; he seems at

[1] The misconduct of Ney in the first part of the 16th of June has been admirably pointed out by Mr. Ropes, *Campaign of Waterloo*, pp. 176–188. I can only quote one sentence: "The whole management of Marshal Ney shows distrust of the Emperor's judgment, unwillingness to take the most obvious steps, finally disobedience of orders." See also H. Houssaye, "*1815*," ii., 185–192, and my *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 109–110.

first to have only descried the corps of Zieten; but he soon recognised that a real army was at hand; Pirch and Thielmann were advancing in force. His forecast for the day had thus turned out false; he could not reach Sombreffe, and still less Gembloux, without fighting a great battle; this had been rather unexpectedly offered by Blücher. Napoleon instantly seized the occasion; Gérard had reached the scene of action a little after one; Lobau was ordered to quicken his march; the Emperor resolved, when ready, to attack. Blücher had now arrayed his three corps on the ground: they formed a most dangerously extended front, from Wagnelée on the extreme right, to the centre, Ligny, and thence to Sombreffe, and to Tougreiênes and Balâtre on the extreme left; for Blücher sought to join hands with Wellington, and to guard his communications with Namur; and though his position was in parts very strong, it was vulnerable at some points, and was much too widely held. But this was not all, or even nearly all; the Prussian army would be on the rear of Ney, should the Marshal, as was to be assumed, be in possession of Quatre Bras; it would be almost under the guns of the division to be detached to Marbais; it was open to attack in front, flank, and rear; it might be nearly surrounded and destroyed. Napoleon felt assured of a decisive triumph at hand; he said[1] to Gérard, in whom he placed great trust: "The campaign may be brought to a close in three hours. If Ney executes his orders properly not a gun of the Prussian army will escape: it is entrapped in a fatal

[1] Napoleon, *Comment.*, v., pp. 140–141.

position." From another point of view Wellington augured very ill of the fortunes of his colleague in the battle at hand. The British General had hastened from Quatre Bras to meet Blücher; he promised to assist him if this was in his power; but it is not true, as German writers have alleged, that Blücher was about to fight with the certainty of his ally's support; his own correspondence proves the exact contrary. With his fine tactical insight, Wellington had perceived a bad mistake in the disposition of the Prussian army; the reserves, arrayed on high uplands, were most wrongly exposed. He remonstrated in vain with the stubborn old chief; as he rode from the field he drily said to his staff: "If they fight here they will be damnably mauled."

The battle of Ligny began at about three in the afternoon. The Prussian army was some 87,000 strong; the French, including the corps of Lobau, some 78,000; but the French had a superiority in cavalry and guns. The plan of Napoleon's attack was perfectly designed[1]; Vandamme, supported by a division of Reille, detached for some time, was to fall on Blücher's right, which was greatly exposed; Gérard, with the chief part of his corps, was to storm Ligny; Grouchy was to hold Blücher's far-extended left in check. These attacks might be expected to break the enemy's front, badly placed on the ground, and stretching much too far; but they were to be combined with the decisive onslaught, to be executed by Ney, on Blücher's flank and rear. This

[1] Napoleon at St. Helena triumphantly demolished the petty criticisms made on this project (*Comment.*, vi., 146–147).

last was to be the mortal stroke; had it been struck there would have been an end of the Prussian army. Napoleon spared no pains to make its delivery assured; at two he had sent off a message to Ney directing him to attack "a Prussian corps" on his right; at a quarter after three he despatched another message, telling the Marshal "to envelop the flank and the rear of the Prussian army."[1] Soon after this he was informed by Lobau that Ney was fighting a battle with Wellington; the roar of cannon at Quatre Bras was, indeed, proof of this. The Emperor accordingly summoned D'Erlon to his own field—D'Erlon was still at a distance from Quatre Bras, in the rear—ordering that general to march on "St. Amand, near Ligny"; that is, to strike Blücher's flank with his corps, 20,000 strong. A staff officer was the bearer of this order; a duplicate was sent to Ney by a second staff officer.[2]

The conflict at Ligny raged for two or three hours, without leading to decisive results, though the Prussian army was, on the whole, worsted. Vandamme mastered St. Amand, and drew near Wagnelée, on Blücher's extreme right; the veteran

[1] The expression "Prussian corps" instead of "army," has puzzled commentators. The word was probably a mistake of Soult, a bad chief of the staff in the campaign.

[2] The D'Erlon incident, as it has been called, has been the subject of much controversy, for it had a most important bearing on the results of the campaign. I have never doubted that Napoleon gave the order as above mentioned. See my *Great Commanders of Modern Times*, p. 329, and *Disputed Passages of the Campaign of 1815* (*English Historical Review*, January, 1895, p. 68). H. Houssaye has set the question at rest ("*1815*," ii., 162–163); but I do not think the text of Napoleon's order is genuine (*ibid.*, ii., 201).

warrior was all but turned and outflanked. Gérard attacked Ligny, which had been partly fortified; the position was one of considerable strength; it was taken and retaken after furious efforts; no quarter was asked for or given by troops animated by savage national hatred. Meanwhile Grouchy successfully engaged Thielmann, and was able to paralyse a superior force by demonstrations which held his enemy fast to the spot. The fight was desperately contested along three-fourths of the line, but the losses of the Prussians were much greater than those of the French; as Wellington had foreseen, their reserves were cruelly stricken[1]; and Blücher was compelled to employ a considerable part of his reserve against an army much more skilfully arrayed on the field. It was now about half-past five o'clock. Vandamme sent a report to Napoleon that a large hostile column was advancing against his flank and rear towards Fleurus, and that he would be driven from his position if he was not reinforced. The Emperor despatched an aide-de-camp to find out how the matter stood; this officer returned, in rather more than an hour, announcing that the apparition was that of the corps of D'Erlon, which, we have seen, had been summoned to the field of Ligny. Erelong the great mass of this force was seen to disappear. This most untoward accident saved Blücher. Had D'Erlon marched to St. Amand, as he had been directed, the Prussian army must have been overwhelmed. It is now tolerably certain how this did not happen.

[1] Napoleon also noticed this. *Comment.*, v., 144.

D'Erlon received the order sent by the staff officer; he turned aside from the roads to Quatre Bras towards Ligny; but the order was not sufficiently precise.[1] He marched on Fleurus, not on St. Amand; that is, he seemed to be threatening the French, not the Prussian army. Napoleon, trusting to the message from Vandamme, appears to have accepted a mistake as a fact; but it remains a mystery why he did not bring up D'Erlon to the field, when the aide-de-camp had ascertained that D'Erlon was at hand. Many surmises have been made to account for this; but it seems most probable that the Emperor, losing his presence of mind in the confusion of a great battle, unaccountably missed the occasion. All that is certain is, that the message to D'Erlon was badly worded, and that Napoleon's account of this incident is very obscure; he seems to have felt that a great mistake had been made.[2]

The march of D'Erlon, announced to be that of an enemy, had caused great disorder in Vandamme's columns; they lost much of the vantage ground they had gained. By this time Blücher had learned that

[1] This was another instance of the negligence of Soult, as chief of the French staff, repeatedly seen in the campaign. Soult was naturally indolent, and had little or no experience of this most important office.

[2] Napoleon's narrative of the D'Erlon incident will be found in *Comment.*, v., 142. In Gourgaud's *Mémoires*, i., 174, the Emperor is made to say: "Le mouvement D'Erlon m'a fait bien du tort; on croyait autour de moi que c' etait l'ennemi." In my *Great Commanders* and *Disputed Passages* I have come to the conclusion that a mistake was made by Napoleon, and this is the view of H. Houssaye ("*1815*," ii., 203; see also my *Campaign of 1815*, p. 145).

he could expect no help from Wellington, engaged for hours with Ney at Quatre Bras; but the old chief thought his opportunity had come. He made a desperate onslaught on Vandamme, collecting all the available troops at hand; his object was to outflank the French left, perhaps to drive it into the defiles of the Sambre. The attack, supported by a great part of the Marshal's reserve, was formidable, and not far from successful; Napoleon was obliged to send part of the Imperial Guard to the aid of Vandamme: this reinforcement brought the attack to a stand. The Emperor now made ready for a decisive counter-stroke; he could no longer hope to annihilate Blücher; but he had the means at hand of winning the battle. The Imperial Guard and the horsemen of Milhaud, sustained by the divisions of Gérard, were launched against the Prussian centre at Ligny; this was now held by a small force only, for the Prussian reserves had been wasted and greatly weakened, and large detachments had been made to join in the attack on Vandamme. The result, in the expressive language of Soult, was "like a transformation scene at a theatre." Ligny was carried, after a short resistance; the Prussian army was rent asunder; Blücher was unhorsed in a cavalry mêlée; he owed his life to a devoted aide-de-camp. The exulting French had soon taken possession of the ground held by their defeated enemies; but these fought fiercely to the last moment, and fell back a short distance only. The Emperor, in a word, had gained a victory; but this was not the complete and absolute triumph which unquestionably would have

been seen had D'Erlon fallen on Blücher's flank or rear; in that event, Soult wrote, without exaggerating the facts, that "30,000 Prussians would have been made prisoners." The losses of the French were about 11,000 men; those of the enemy 18,000 killed and wounded; and from 8000 to 12,000 flying troops disbanded.[1]

Meanwhile Quatre Bras had been the scene of a combat, fierce and well contested, but unlike Ligny. It was a little after two on the 16th of June, when Ney began his attack on this important point, which he ought to have occupied and passed many hours before. Perponcher, the general who had so happily sent his division to Quatre Bras on the 15th, had with his chief, the young Prince of Orange, made their preparations to resist the enemy. The ground traversed by the great main road from Charleroy to Brussels, but protected by woodland and two or three large farms, was favourable to the defensive as a whole, and Perponcher and the Prince had skilfully arrayed their men; but these were unable to withstand the onset of the French; by three Quatre Bras was almost in the grasp of Ney. The Marshal, nevertheless, had been held in check for an hour, and this had been a godsend for the Allies; Perponcher's division may have been a forlorn hope, but it had been a forlorn hope of the very greatest value. About half-past three, Welling-

[1] The account of the battle of Ligny, by Clausewitz, is very able and brilliant, but very disingenuous. The historian conceals the truth as to what must have been the result had D'Erlon fallen on Blücher; see, too, the admirable remarks of Mr. Ropes, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, pp. 163–175.

ton, returning from Ligny, had most fortunately reached Quatre Bras; Picton's division and other detachments had reached the field by this time; but Ney had been joined by the mass of Reille's corps: he disposed of from 18,000 to 19,000 men, and was very superior in cavalry and guns; the situation had become "most critical" for the British commander. Wellington, however, an eye-witness has said, was "as cool as ice"; his dispositions for the defence were, as always, excellent. Picton and his soldiers successfully held their ground on the left; but the Dutch, Belgian, and German auxiliaries, who formed a large part of the Duke's army, were distinctly beaten at the centre and on the right; and though Wellington was again reinforced, the tide of battle was still turning against him; he must have been overwhelmed had Ney concentrated his forces, as he might have done, by the early afternoon of the 16th at latest. It was now about half-past five o'clock; the Marshal had just received the message sent by Napoleon at a quarter after three, directing him to "envelope Blücher's flank and rear"; how he had failed to second his great master's designs! Ney could not now hope to do the Emperor's bidding; he was held in check at Quatre Bras by Wellington; D'Erlon and his corps were far from the scene; only a part of Kellermann's cavalry, which had been placed in his hands, was on the spot. Ney acted with precipitate haste; he launched a single brigade of Kellermann against the enemy, a useless and ill-conceived effort; the steel-clad horsemen made a very fine charge;

but their onset was fruitless, and they were erelong repulsed.

During this episode in the conflict, or about that time, a superior officer, sent off by D'Erlon, had informed the Marshal that his chief had been summoned to join Napoleon. Ney flamed out into indignant wrath; he forgot that D'Erlon had received the Emperor's orders, and that D'Erlon was too far off to be of any use at Quatre Bras; he peremptorily enjoined his lieutenant to come to his aid. D'Erlon very injudiciously obeyed this command; clearly he ought to have done what Napoleon had told him to do; he could have made Ligny a decisive victory for France; he was too late to reach the Marshal in time. Despite the angry protests of his own soldiery, he drew off three-fourths of his corps from where it stood, and marched towards Quatre Bras; he left a single division to observe the Prussians, a bad half-measure that effected nothing. Twenty thousand excellent troops, therefore, who could have crushed Blücher had they fallen on his flank, in conformity with Napoleon's orders, or who would have struck Wellington down, had they been brought up by Ney to Quatre Bras in time, were idly moved to and fro between two battlefields, and did not fire a shot on the 16th of June; Napoleon probably made a mistake; but the blame must lie mainly on Ney, and in part on D'Erlon. The Marshall meanwhile had continued to fight at Quatre Bras; the staff officer who had carried the despatch in duplicate, directing D'Erlon to march on St. Amand, had entreated Ney in vain to countermand

his order: he had persisted in recalling his subordinate to his side. The evening by this time had far advanced; considerable reinforcements flowed into Wellington, who had conducted the defence with characteristic skill: Ney was compelled to retreat to Frasnes; the losses of the French were about 4300 men; those of the allies rather a larger number. As we look back at the operations of the day, Ney, it may be admitted, did one good service; he prevented Wellington from stretching a hand to Blücher. But if we recollect that he was at the head of an army of more than 40,000 men, and how great his opportunities were, his conduct must be in no doubtful sense censured. Had he assembled his forces in sufficient time, he ought to have been able to overthrow Wellington, and to detach a force that would have destroyed Blücher: nay, had he not improperly recalled D'Erlon, disobeying flagrantly his master's orders, Ligny would have been a second Jena for Prussia. Napoleon has written, without exaggerating the truth, that he would have "crushed his enemies on the 16th, had Ney done his duty on the left." In that event Waterloo would not have been fought, superior strategy would have produced its natural results.[1]

The operations of the French on the 16th of June had been "incomplete," as had been the case on the 15th. It is simply ignoring plain facts

[1] For an admirable résumé of what Ney might have accomplished on the 16th of June, see Napoleon, *Comment.*, v., 199, 200. Consult also the judicious remarks of Mr. Ropes, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, pp. 186, 187.

to deny that, had the Emperor's arrangements been properly carried out, Blücher would have been crushed on the field of Ligny, and that Wellington would have been severely beaten ; a magnificent conception of war would have been realised. But if these decisive results had not been obtained, the strategic advantage gained by Napoleon, from the outset of the campaign, had been largely increased ; and the prospect before him was of the most splendid promise. He was master of the main road from Charleroy to Brussels, up to the line of the communication of his foes ; he had broken in the weak allied centre : Wellington would have to leave Quatre Bras, as Blücher had been driven from Sombreffe. The hostile armies would be compelled to retreat into an intricate country of woodland and marsh, where it would be very difficult to effect their juncture, and where this could be made impossible, they could probably be kept separated and defeated in detail. But this was only a part of the results ; it was in the power of Napoleon to achieve a signal triumph for France on the 17th of June. The Prussian army had been badly worsted, and its chief disabled : it could not fight a battle for many hours, and was in retreat ; Wellington could not assemble 45,000 men at Quatre Bras, and was far from his colleague "in the air"; Napoleon was at the head of more than 100,000 men ; and of these 60,000 were fine fresh troops. In these circumstances, the Emperor had the choice of three courses ; all were in the very highest degree auspicious.[1] He might

[1] All commentators are now agreed as to what Napoleon might

send only a few thousand men to observe Blücher, and might fall on Wellington, a short way off at Quatre Bras, with his own army and that of Ney; a disaster must have befallen the British commander. Or, leaving a small detachment to observe Wellington, he might pursue Blücher, with the mass of his forces; in that event nothing could have saved Blücher. Or, finally, in conformity with more scientific strategy, and with grand examples set by Turenne and himself, Napoleon might attack Wellington with from 70,000 to 80,000 men, an army that ought to make victory certain; at the same time he might send some 30,000 against Blücher; the Prussian army, we must bear in mind, had not been destroyed, and it might be reinforced by the whole corps of Bulow. In any of these cases, it seemed hardly possible but that decisive success would be obtained.

The events of the 17th of June, however, turned out otherwise; it is essential to examine how this happened. To secure the splendid results he might have secured, Napoleon should have been equal to himself, and should have shown his characteristic

have achieved on the 17th of June. Reference may be made to the authorities cited in my *Campaign of 1815*, p. 156; and see Ropes's *Campaign of Waterloo*, pp. 197–200, an excellent résumé. Of the three alternative operations Soult, who knew what British soldiers were, preferred the first; he wished every available man to be directed against Wellington. H. Houssaye, "*1815*," ii., 240. According to Gourgaud, *Mémoires*, i., 197, Napoleon accepted this view after Waterloo. Clausewitz has written that the second alternative would have been the best, but this is more than doubtful. The third alternative was the most correct in pure strategy; it was adopted by Napoleon, but too late; and the execution of it was utterly mismanaged.

energy and resource, usually seen in following up victory. He ought to have had reports from his lieutenants at Ligny and Quatre Bras as to the state of his army before retiring to rest; he ought to have had his troops ready to march against Blücher or Wellington by the early morning of the 17th; this was only what was to be expected of him. Unfortunately, at this juncture he lost many hours; he was in a state of inaction for a not inconsiderable time; this is acknowledged by his friendly as well as his hostile critics. He went back to Fleurus after the defeat of Blücher, completely exhausted by the work of two days; and though he gave general directions for the pursuit of the Prussians, he saw no one until six or seven in the morning of the 17th. This conduct was so utterly different from the extraordinary activity of other campaigns that there must have been a real cause for it; this, I believe, was the state of Napoleon's health, which had been in decline for many months, especially since his return from Elba. Not that his genius did not often shine out in full force, or that he was not still capable of great exertion; but he was subject to two distressing ailments and to a kind of lethargy which occasionally made him good for nothing.[2] There is cogent proof that this was the case with him on the night of the 16th[1]; this accounts, and can alone account, for his seeming remissness. Meanwhile, the Prussians after Ligny were not even observed; it

[1] For the state of Napoleon's health in 1815 see the authorities in my *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 164–166.

[2] Dorsey Gardner, *Quatre Bras, Ligny, and Waterloo.*

was assumed that they were utterly routed; carelessness and negligence ran riot in the camp of the victors; worse than all, Ney and Soult did not communicate with each other, as was their obvious duty. The Achilles of war, whatever the cause, was thus slumbering in his tent; his whole army and its chiefs were reposing in thoughtless confidence. It is unnecessary to say how dangerous this was in the presence of two such men as Blücher and Wellington; the first always indomitable in adverse fortune, the second prompt, skilful, and daring, when his adversary was before him.

A letter from Soult to Ney—dictated, no doubt, by the Emperor between seven and eight in the morning—was the first sign of life shown by the French army on the 17th of June. This important despatch announced that "the Prussian army was routed"; it added, among many other things, that the French army was to make a halt for the day; unquestionably it had suffered a great deal.[1] Meanwhile the Emperor had sent two of his cavalry chiefs after Blücher; he reached the field of Ligny between nine and ten; he was received with enthusiastic acclaim by his troops; but he was obliged to await for a time the report of his horsemen. These informed him that the Prussians were falling back towards Namur and Liège, that is, on the line of their communications with the Rhine; but that a large body of the enemy had assembled around Gembloux, that is, near a village some eighteen

[1] This despatch will be found in La Tour d'Auvergne, *Waterloo*, pp. 211–213. It is, I think, conclusive as to the D'Erlon incident.

miles from Brussels, but almost parallel with Quatre Bras; this would show that Blücher may have divided his forces, but that he was, perhaps, thinking of drawing near Wellington. The lame and impotent conclusion of a halt was abandoned; Napoleon instantly resolved to attack Wellington, taking with him every man he could spare from Ligny; a message was sent to Ney to join in the attack. At the same time, that is, before noon, Grouchy was to be detached, with a considerable restraining wing, to pursue Blücher and to hold him in check, and, as a matter of course, to keep him away from Wellington. These operations were in accordance with true strategy, especially having regard to the probable strength of Blücher; but they were undertaken late; precious hours had been lost; success, which ought to have been made certain, had been rendered doubtful; nay, there were chances that Fortune might become adverse. The orders given to Grouchy were of supreme importance; they have been angrily discussed, but their import is plain. In an interview with the Marshal, the Emperor told him that his mission was to reach and to attack Blücher; that he was to communicate with headquarters by the road from Namur to Quatre Bras; the Emperor all but certainly added that Grouchy was to hold a position intermediate between the Prussian army and his own, which, if possible, was to attack Wellington in front of the forest of Soignies. In a despatch sent a little later Napoleon ordered Grouchy "to march to Gembloux with the mass of his forces"[1]; he

[1] The orders given to Grouchy on the 17th of June have been the

added significantly that Wellington and Blücher might be trying to unite, and to endeavour to fight another battle.[1]

The French army was now divided into two groups; the first, some 72,000 strong, with the Emperor at its head, was to attack Wellington; the second, not quite 34,000 men, under Grouchy, was to pursue Blücher. Napoleon reached Quatre Bras at about two in the afternoon; Ney had not stirred from his camp at Frasnes; his master was incensed that he had made no movement; he had again set positive orders at nought. But Napoleon and Ney could not, for many hours, have made any real impression on Wellington's army. The Duke—here different from his great antagonist—had been in the saddle from the early dawn of the 17th; he had been informed of the defeat of Ligny, and of the line of the Prussian army's retreat; he resolved to fall back on a parallel line; but told the aide-de-camp, sent by the chief of Blücher's staff, that he would accept battle at Waterloo, on the 18th of June, if he had the support of one or two Prussian *corps d'armée*. Wellington's retreat was begun at ten in the morning; it was admirably conducted, and with perfect steadiness; the Emperor was a great deal too late. A body of British cavalry, however, had

subject of endless controversy by commentators. See H. Houssaye, "*1815*," ii., 225; *Thiers*, vi., 470; my own *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 168–170. Jomini, *Précis de la Campagne de 1815*, pp. 188, 189, has no doubt as to Napoleon's meaning.

[1] As to this most important order reference may be made to the admirable remarks of Mr. Ropes, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, pp. 209–211.

screened the movement, and still continued at Quatre Bras; Napoleon pushed his own cavalry forward, and vehemently directed the pursuit in person. But only insignificant skirmishes took place; the pursuit, in fact, was to no purpose; and, besides, a tempest of rain which flooded the country had made military operations well-nigh useless. By seven in the evening the French squadrons had reached the uplands of La Belle Alliance, in front of the position chosen by Wellington; Napoleon ordered a charge to be made; the thunder of many batteries made him aware that he had a considerable army before him; in fact, Wellington had assembled the greatest part of his forces. "What would I have given," the Emperor exclaimed, "to have had the power of Joshua, and to have stayed the march of the sun!"[1] But the march of the sun had not been turned to account in the morning; a great opportunity had passed away.

Meanwhile Grouchy, with nearly 34,000 men, had been on the march to pursue Blücher. His movements, however, had been extremely slow; his master had advanced not far from twenty miles on the 17th; he had not advanced more than nine or ten; it deserves special notice that part of his cavalry had come up with the corps of Thielmann, falling back from Ligny, and yet did not hang on its retreat, unpardonable negligence, which may have had great results. Grouchy had his army around Gembloux by nine on the night of the 17th, some of his squadrons being at Sauvenière, northwards; during the night

[1] *Comment.*, v., 200.

he received several reports to the effect that Blücher all but certainly was at Wavre, a town some fifteen miles from Gembloux, and about ten or eleven from Waterloo, on a line parallel to Wellington's army. We have reached, perhaps, the most important passage of the campaign, for it led to the memorable events that followed. Grouchy wrote twice to the Emperor, between ten at night and three in the morning, that he was on the track of the Prussian army, and that Blücher had assembled it around Wavre; he added that should this prove to be the case, he would follow Blücher and march on Wavre, "in order to keep him apart from Wellington"[1]; significant words, which show that he understood his mission, and knew what his restraining wing was to do; had he intelligently carried out this purpose, Waterloo would have been a French, not an allied victory. While Napoleon was thus before Waterloo and Grouchy was at Gembloux, even now backward, the Prussian army, beaten as it had been at Ligny, had effected its retreat in complete safety. As we have seen, it had not even been observed by its enemy; Zieten and Pirch marched northwards by Tilly and Sauvenière; Thielmann, though reached by the French horsemen, was not molested; Bulow, with 29,000 fresh troops, joined the main army by Walhain and Corry. The whole army, still some 90,000 strong, and with from 270 to 280 guns, had assembled

[1] These despatches will be found in La Tour d'Auvergne, *Waterloo*, pp. 230, 231, and 318. Grouchy shamefully garbled the first afterwards, to excuse his own conduct. His works on the campaign are a tissue of falsehoods.

round Wavre on the night of the 17th, on both banks of the stream of the Dyle, its divisions, however, being rather far apart; that is, it held positions parallel to the field of Waterloo; but it was at a considerable distance from the British commander. This movement was directed by Gneisenau, the chief of Blücher's staff; it has been extolled by the worshippers of success; but it was really a very imperfect half-measure. Blücher was now separated from Wellington by a long march, through a most difficult and broken country; he was not near his colleague as he had been at Sombreffe; Grouchy had been detached to prevent their junction; had he been a true soldier he would have made this impossible.[1]

We turn to Napoleon on the night of the 17th of June. The great warrior showed no signs of the lethargy which had disabled him the night before: he carefully observed his own position, and that of the enemy, lit up by a succession of bivouac fires. His chief thought was how to bring Wellington to bay: he was afraid that this would be almost impossible, for rain had continued to fall in torrents; but he had resolved to risk a night attack should the British General decamp. He had been informed that a Prussian column was not far from Wavre; but he gave little attention to this report; he believed that Blücher, severely stricken at Ligny, would not venture to march on Waterloo; in any case, Grouchy would hold him in check, and this was to be expected from Grouchy's letters. At the same time

[1] See, on this subject, the conclusive observations of Napoleon, *Comment.*, v., 205.

he did not neglect Grouchy; it may be affirmed that he ordered the Marshal to send a detachment, on the 18th, to the main French army, falling on the flank or the rear of Wellington; this would be the counterpart of the movement that ought to have been made by Ney on the 16th.[1] Passing on to the Allies Wellington had made up his mind to encounter Napoleon on the 18th. Blücher, though still suffering from the shock of his fall, had nobly written that he would join his colleague with his whole army. Should Wellington and Blücher once unite, they would be largely superior to Napoleon in numbers; but were there reasonable grounds for supposing that they could effect their junction in time to baffle the attack of the Imperial army? Blücher would have to make a long and hazardous march from Wavre; was it not certain, having regard to the Emperor's strategy, illustrated in many splendid campaigns, that there would be a restraining wing on his way to stop him? It should be observed, too, that the allied chiefs thought that Napoleon had 100,000 men before Waterloo, and that Grouchy was far away with 15,000 only; but Wellington had only assembled 70,000,—bad auxiliaries to a large extent,—what would be his chances in the battle at hand, should the French attack in the early forenoon, as would have happened but for a mere accident? The allied dispositions for the 18th were, therefore, faulty;

[1] As regards this order, which was exactly in Napoleon's manner, see *Comment.*, v., 154, 155, and the authorities cited in my *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 190–236. I am convinced the order was given; but it never reached Grouchy.

Napoleon has proved with irresistible logic [1] that his adversaries should not have run the risk of fighting a great battle before Waterloo; both should have fallen back and joined hands near Brussels. This whole strategy was essentially false; it may commend itself to the courtiers of success; it cannot blind the real student of war.

Napoleon's army was nearly 72,000 strong, including 15,000 cavalry and 240 guns. The Emperor had intended to attack at nine in the forenoon; but a large part of his troops was still in the rear; he had no notion of making an attack piecemeal. The attack, however, might have begun at about ten [2]; but the state of the ground, sodden with incessant rain, made the manœuvring of cannon and horsemen very difficult; at the instance of Drouot, one of his best officers, Napoleon postponed his onset for a time. Opinions have differed whether this was not a grave mistake; the delay was an advantage in a certain sense, but it favoured a Prussian march from Wavre; all that can be said, with certainty, is that, on the 18th of June, the sun in its course fought against Napoleon; Wellington must have been defeated had the attack been made at about ten, on reasonably solid ground. Wellington's army, we have seen, was composed of about 70,000 men,

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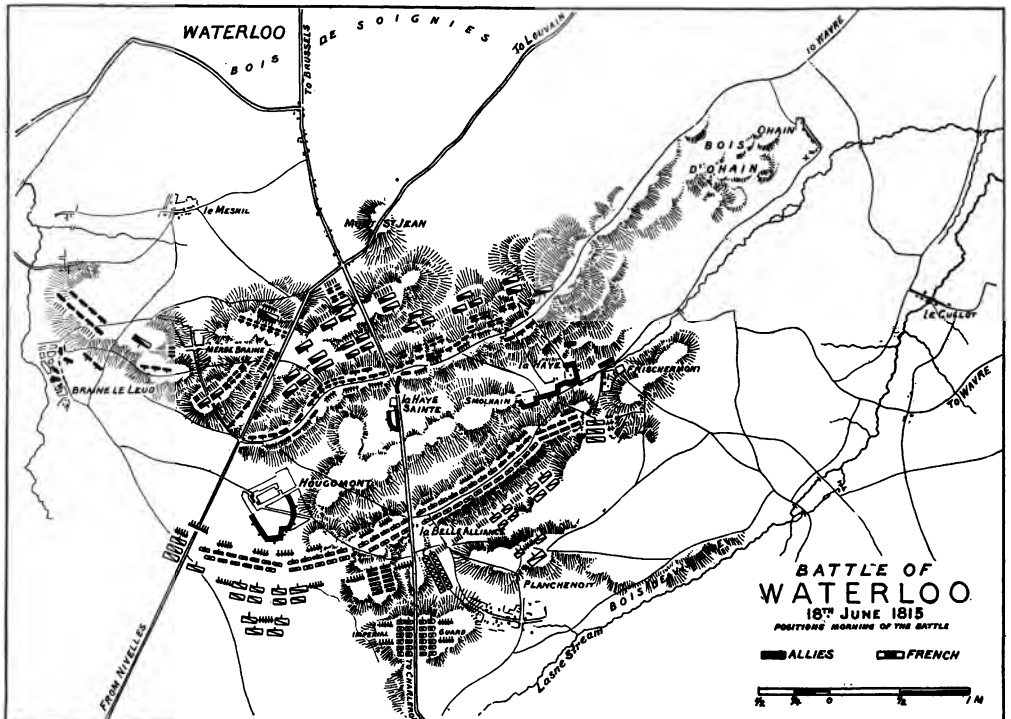
[1] For Napoleon's conclusive reasoning on this subject reference may be made to *Comment.*, v., 210–211. The passage is unanswerable and avoided by English and German critics. See also my *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 193–194.

[2] The order for the attack at nine is in La Tour d'Auvergne, *Waterloo*, p. 251. Charras most improperly suppressed it.


WATERLOO
BOIS DE SOIGNIES
TO BRUSSELS
TO LOUVAIN
TO WAVRE
BOIS D'OHAIN
OHAIN
le MESNIL
MONT ST JEAN
MERSE BRAINE
BRAINE LE LEUD
la HAYE
FRISCHERMONT
la HAYE SAINTE
SMOLHAIN
HOUGOMONT
la BELLE ALLIANCE
PLANCHENOIT
BOIS DE
IMPERIAL
GUARD
TO CHARLEROI
FROM NIVELLES
Lasne Stream
le CULLOT
TO WAVRE
BATTLE OF
WATERLOO
18TH JUNE 1815
POSITIONS MORNING OF THE BATTLE
ALLIES
FRENCH
½ ¼ 0 ½ 1 M

comprising 13,500 cavalry and 159 guns[1]; but it was crowded with very inferior levies; it did not contain 50,000 really good troops; it was not nearly so powerful as the army it opposed; all the more reason that its chief should not have accepted battle. The Duke had made his arrangements for the defence at an early hour; with one great exception they were, on the whole, masterly; they fully revealed the consummate tactician. Ever apprehensive for his right, he left 17,000 men near Hal and had thus greatly weakened his main army; unquestionably this was a strategic error[2]; even in the dispositions he made at Waterloo his right was, perhaps, too strongly occupied. But, as a rule, the choice of this position had been admirably made, and the means he adopted to hold it were, in the highest degree, excellent. The front of his main battle was covered by a crossroad, leading from Ohain to Braine le Leud, and forming in itself a very strong obstacle; the slopes before it gave free play to the fire of artillery. Before the position stood a kind of succession of outworks; the château of Hougoumont, with its walled enclosures; the large farm of La Haye Sainte with its buildings, and the little hamlets of Papelotte and La Haye; these were calculated to break the first fury of the enemy's

[1] I have taken the figures as to the numbers of Napoleon's and Wellington's forces from Charras, who has studied the subject with great care. The English estimate for Wellington, rather more than 67,000 men, omits commissioned and non-commissioned officers and bandsmen.

[2] All commentators are agreed as to this. See especially Charras, ii., 72–73.

attack. But the most distinctive feature of the position was this: the reserves were kept behind the ridge of Mont St. Jean, screened to a great extent from the fire of the French guns; this was exactly the opposite of what had been seen at Ligny. Wellington knew what his antagonist had done with this arm, and had provided most skilfully against its effects. The ground, too, gave facilities for counter-attacks always essential in the case of a well-designed defence.

While Napoleon and Wellington were thus confronting each other, we may glance at the operations of Grouchy, the evil genius of France on the great day of Waterloo. He had learned on the night of the 17th that Blücher was at Wavre, that is, ten or eleven miles from his colleague; he knew that his mission was to interpose between Blücher and Wellington: he has acknowledged this in his own despatches. To effect this object was by no means difficult; he should cross the Dyle by the bridges of Moustier and Ottignies, about nine or ten miles from Gembloux; this movement would place him on the western bank of the Dyle and could be accomplished before noon,[1] if reasonable activity were employed; the restraining wing would thus be near Wavre, and on the flank of Blücher, were the old Prussian chief drawing near Wellington, and would be in direct communication with the main French army; Napoleon's orders would have been carried out in their true spirit. Had this been done, Grouchy would

[1] This is admitted even by Charras, a libeller of Napoleon, ii., 115.

probably have defeated a part of the Prussian army and certainly would have prevented it reaching Waterloo; France would not have had to mourn for a frightful disaster.[1] Unhappily the Marshal, a mere cavalry chief, adopted an exactly opposite course; he advanced along the eastern bank of the Dyle, making for Wavre, but not interfering with Blücher[2]; his march, too, was extremely slow; he was really playing into the enemy's hands. Meanwhile Blücher, not molested or disturbed, was moving on Waterloo to join his colleague. The movement, however, was too late, and was retarded by accidents that need not have happened. Gneisenau distrusted and disliked Wellington; he charged him with misconduct on the 15th of June; he disapproved of an advance on Waterloo until he was assured that Wellington was determined to make a stand. He was ignorant, too, of the whereabouts of Grouchy; he thought that the Marshal had a small force only; had he known that Grouchy had nearly 34,000 men he probably would not have sanctioned the march from Wavre; and he was the mentor of his aged chief. The Prussian army, however, was at last on the march; but it was greatly and very unnecessarily delayed. Bulow was moved first, because his troops

[1] For what Grouchy should have done and what he could have accomplished in that event, see the authorities collected in my *Campaign of 1815*, p. 326. Charras is the only writer who takes a contrary view. I am the only English writer who has seriously gone into the subject.—*Campaign of 1815*, pp. 314–328.

[2] Grouchy had never had an independent command. Pasquier, *Mémoires*, iii., 232, relates that Soult and other generals warned Napoleon not to give him one.

had not fought at Ligny; but Bulow was on the eastern bank of the Dyle, that is, farther than any of his colleagues from Wellington's lines; Pirch marched next, and was followed by Zieten; but these generals were slow and timid; they had not forgotten the defeat of the 16th; Thielmann was left behind to defend Wavre. The Prussian army was thus divided into masses far apart and exposing their flanks for miles to their foes; had Grouchy fallen on these, as he might have done, he could have stricken Bulow, at least, with effect; and he could have kept Blücher far away from Wellington.

The French army had taken its ground at about eleven on the 18th; the masses of infantry and cavalry on a front of rather more than two miles, on either side of the great main road from Charleroy to Brussels, presented a most imposing spectacle. Wellington's army, on a more extended front, had only its foremost line displayed: the reserves were carefully withheld from view; it stood motionless and silent, while the enthusiastic shouts of its enemy rang out up to the ridge of Mont St. Jean. The plan of Napoleon's attack was grandly designed,[1] but, as we shall see, it was more than once changed; and it was badly carried out on this eventful day. The centre of Wellington at La Haye Sainte was to be stormed; this would open to Napoleon the way to Brussels; at the same time Wellington's left was to be turned and forced; this was the weakest part

[1] Compare Jomini, *Précis de la Campagne de 1815*, p. 198; Charras, ii., 88.

of the British chief's position. The attack began at about half-past eleven; the soldiery of Reille advanced against Hougoumont; the movement was intended to be only a feint, to withdraw the attention of the enemy from the decisive onslaught. But owing to the passionate ardour of the French chiefs and their men—conspicuously seen throughout the day, for the victory at Ligny had turned their heads—the feint was turned into a real attack; no marked impression was made on Hougoumont; the Duke reinforced the defenders from time to time; the assailants perished in hundreds, and were held completely in check. At about one the Emperor's grand attack opened; the fire of a great battery of eighty guns, so directed as partly to rake the enemy, searched the centre and the left of the Allies; Wellington's front was in some degree shaken; the Belgian auxiliaries, too much exposed, gave way. The corps of D'Erlon, eager to avenge the 16th, and a division of Reille were pushed forward; the French soldiery swarmed around La Haye Sainte; they reached the crest of the Duke's position; the battle seemed to be almost won. But three of D'Erlon's divisions had been arrayed in dense and clumsily formed columns[1]; they had not, besides, the support of cavalry; the superiority of the line over the column was seen, as so often had been the case in the Peninsular War. D'Erlon's men were furiously charged by Picton and by British and Scotch infantry; the staggering masses were forced back by degrees; their defeat was completed

[1] See Ropes's *Campaign of Waterloo*, p. 305, and Charras, ii., 25.

by a magnificent charge of horsemen. At the same time Reille's division was driven from La Haye Sainte; and a body of cuirassiers, sent by Napoleon to the spot, was beaten by another body of British cavalry. D' Erlon's fourth division was also compelled to retreat; the first great effort of the Emperor had failed. But Wellington, too, had cruelly suffered; Picton and hundreds of his best troops had fallen; his cavàlry, carried too far in their triumph, had been half cut to pieces; his inferior auxiliaries had shown signs of flinching; the vulnerable points in his position had been searched and discovered.

A short time before the great attack of D' Erlon, Napoleon had cast his eyes over the whole scene of action; he saw what appeared to be a kind of cloud three or four miles away on his right. His practised sight perceived that this was a body of troops. Soult expressed an opinion that this was a detachment from Grouchy—significant words of extreme importance; the truth was in a short time ascertained. A Prussian officer had been made prisoner; he reported to the Emperor that the apparition was a part of the corps of Bulow, stationed around the hamlet of St. Lambert; that Bulow was on his way to join Wellington; and that no tidings had been heard of Grouchy, who, it was assumed, was moving towards the main French army. This intelligence, of course, was extremely grave; Napoleon despatched Lobau with ten thousand men to observe Bulow, and to hold him in check; he was to take position between St. Lambert and the

Emperor's right flank. It appears certain, however, that, at this moment, Napoleon had little or no fear for himself; he was rather apprehensive that Bulow might intercept Grouchy, supposed to be on the march to the French lines at Plancenoit. He certainly expected Grouchy to be not far off, if the Marshal was not keeping Blücher away from Wellington; this would be in conformity with his own orders; and all but certainly he had directed Grouchy, on the night of the 17th, to send a detachment to his aid. Besides, Napoleon had, on the morning of the 18th, despatched a body of horsemen and a special messenger, towards the bridges of Moustier and Ottignies, in the assurance that Grouchy was crossing the Dyle at these points; he told the special messenger that the Marshal was already at hand. Nor is there anything in an ambiguous despatch from Soult to make an impartial critic reject this inference. In reply to the letter from Grouchy, written at three in the morning of the 18th, Soult said that his master approved "of the march on Wavre"; but he ordered the Marshal to "manœuvre in our direction"; and he positively commanded him to advance to the battlefield of Waterloo. The meaning, badly expressed as it was, was obviously that Grouchy was to move on Wavre, but by the western bank of the Dyle, so as to keep Blücher apart from Wellington; in any case he was to make his way to the Emperor. Soult added in a postscript written after the prisoner's report, that Bulow was threatening Napoleon's right flank, and that Grouchy was "to attack and crush Bulow," a

clear proof that Grouchy, it was believed, was near.[1]

The attack of D'Erlon had been repulsed at about three; before that time Napoleon had received intelligence from Grouchy of the most ominous kind. The Marshal wrote from Walhain, a village some eight miles from Wavre: he was advancing by the eastern bank of the Dyle, that is, far away from the Imperial army; he did not exactly know what had become of Blücher. Napoleon, therefore, could expect no support from Grouchy; he would have to meet the attack of Bulow on his right flank; he would have to continue the great fight with Wellington. He immediately changed the plan of his battle: he could not now hope to turn the Duke's left, for this would imperil his own right; he ordered Ney, who had the chief charge of all the attacks, to storm La Haye Sainte at any cost, that is, to effect a lodgment in the enemy's centre, but to maintain himself in that point of vantage until he, the Emperor, should dispose of Bulow.[2] Under the cover of an intense cannonade, which greatly ravaged Wellington's troops, Ney succeeded in mastering La Haye Sainte,[3] but, as had been the case on the 16th, he again dis-

[1] I have endeavoured to reconcile the very conflicting evidence and judgments on this most important passage of the battle of Waterloo. The authorities will be found collected in my *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 232, 236, and see the text.

[2] Gourgaud's *Campagne de 1815*. Jerome's *Mémoires*, vii., 22.

[3] As to the capture of La Haye Sainte, see the authorities collected in my *Campaign of 1815*, p. 256. It is very important, if possible, to fix the time, but the evidence is conflicting. From the course of the battle I believe it was four or half-past four.

obeyed his orders. The Marshal thought he perceived signs of retreat on the part of the enemy; no doubt many of the weak auxiliaries were in full flight; in a reckless moment he launched some 5000 horsemen, despite the entreaties of their own chiefs, against Wellington's right centre, still quite unbroken. The onset of these brave troops was very fine; but it was not supported by infantry or guns; the Duke was fully prepared to resist the attack; it failed against the British and German Legionary squares. Meanwhile Napoleon had been fiercely engaged with Bulow; Blücher, fearing for the results of the day,[1] fell on Lobau with 29,000 men. Napoleon was obliged to detach the Young Guard against the advancing enemy, already menacing his right and even his rear at Plancenoit. This attack was for the moment beaten back; the Emperor hastened to the main field of battle, and was indignant at seeing what Ney had done. "The madman!" he exclaimed, "he is ruining France for the second time"; but he decided that Ney's movement must now be sustained.[2] He allowed the Marshal to engage nearly his whole cavalry; but he asserted, to the last hour of his life, that he directed a considerable reserve to be kept intact.[3] The charges of

[1] See the Prussian official account of Waterloo, *Campaign of 1815*, p. 265.

[2] As to Ney's premature and most unwise cavalry attacks, see the authorities in my *Campaign of 1815*, pp. 258–259. They were unquestionably made against Napoleon's orders.

[3] See *Comment.*, v., 177; vi., 150, and H. Houssaye, "*1815*," ii., 364. As to keeping a reserve intact, see the above and Gourgaud, *Mémoires*, *Passim*.

these masses of horsemen, from 11,000 to 12,000 strong, were magnificent and repeatedly pressed home; but again they were very ill supported[1]; the Duke strengthened his right centre with characteristic skill; the proud squadrons were again beaten off by squares, which a brave enemy has written seemed rooted "in the earth"; but thousands of the auxiliaries were fugitives along the main road to Brussels. During this time Bulow had again fallen on Napoleon's right; the Emperor sent a part of the Old Guard to withstand the attack; this effort was for the present successful; the Prussian columns recoiled, and even disappeared. But the attacks made by Ney had once more failed; the flag of England still waved along the ridge of Mont St. Jean, though Wellington's centre at La Haye Sainte was in the gravest peril.[2]

It was now about seven in the evening; the result of the battle still hung in suspense. Napoleon had hopes that he could yet gain a victory, but he must have felt for hours that this could be only a victory in name. The attack of Bulow seemed to be spent; the cannon of Grouchy were heard at Wavre; the Marshal surely could keep Blücher back; the centre of Wellington had been well-nigh broken; fugitives were choking the great main road in thousands. The Emperor resolved to make a last effort with the Imperial Guard; but he could not dispose of more than half of that noble force; the other half was

[1] See on this point the judicious remarks of Mr. Ropes, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, pp. 272, 273.

[2] Shaw Kennedy, an eye-witness, *Battle of Waterloo*, p. 124.

protecting his right flank from the Prussians. But Wellington had a better prospect of success; his British and German Legionary soldiers had held their ground; he had a considerable reserve concealed from his enemy; above all, he knew that Zieten and Pirch were at hand to support Bulow. Six battalions of the Guard were told off for the final attack; these were placed under the command of Ney, but they were directed against the Duke's right centre, his strongest point, not against his gravely endangered centre; four battalions were to second the movement; these were to be led by Napoleon in person. The Guard did all that brave men could do; they even gained some trifling success; but they had not much infantry and no cavalry on their flanks; they were overwhelmed by Wellington's admirably husbanded reserve and part of his fire and line. The whole French army suddenly gave way; the Duke, seeing that the battle had been won, advanced his shattered army a few hundred yards; La Haye Sainte was retaken; fresh British cavalry was let loose on the blood-stained field. Just at this moment Zieten appeared on the scene; from 10,000 to 12,000 Prussians broke the extreme right of Napoleon; Pirch seconded Bulow in another attack; fully 35,000 Prussians fell on Napoleon's right flank and rear. An appalling spectacle of ruin was seen; the beaten army broke up in multitudinous rout; the four battalions of the Guard, which had not been engaged, perished almost to a man, but refused to surrender. The fugitive host, now a mere chaos, relentlessly pursued by the triumphant

Prussians, made its way to Charleroy and crossed the Sambre; as an effective force it was practically destroyed. The losses of the victors were about 23,000 men, those of the vanquished upwards of 40,000.

Wellington proved himself to be, in the highest sense, a great master of tactics on the field of Waterloo. With trifling exceptions he arrayed his army on the fine position of his choice with conspicuous skill, especially in concealing his reserves; he conducted the battle with admirable activity and resource; he was the soul of a magnificent defence. But his chief excellences were his stern constancy and invincible endurance in a most fiery trial, and here no general of the Coalition can be compared to him; the Archduke Charles, we may affirm, would have retreated after the fall of La Haye Sainte. Justice, too, should be done to the British troops. Napoleon had had little experience of them; after Waterloo he recognised their sterling worth; a prouder testimonial has never been given to soldiers.[1] The tactics of the French in the battle were faulty: the attack of Hougoumont was a reckless waste of life; Ney disobeyed the Emperor's orders, and "massacred his cavalry," as his master wrote; the Imperial Guard was wrongly directed; the three arms failed to support each other over and over again throughout the day. Napoleon was, of course, in a sense, responsible for all this; he gave little proof of the energy of his antagonist; this may

[1] "Les Français, quoique si inférieurs en nombre, auraient remporté la victoire, et ce ne fut que la bravoure obstinée et indomptable des troupes anglaises seules qui les empêcha."

have been partly owing to the state of his health; he was dozing for a time during the attack on Hougoumont. But we must recollect, that in the later part of the 18th, he was fighting two battles and could not direct the operations as a whole, and his lieutenants must bear the chief share of the blame; he invariably left a great deal to them, especially when they had been engaged in action. Nevertheless, in spite of the great qualities displayed by Wellington, and the steadfastness and valour of part of his army, and in spite of the tactical mistakes of the French, Napoleon would have won the battle of Waterloo, had he been able to employ his whole forces against the Duke, but his victory, I believe, could not have been decisive.[1] The allied army was very inferior in strength to its enemy: it had fairly defeated the attack of D'Erlon; but it could not have withstood a combined effort made not only by the Emperor's first line, but by Lobau, the Imperial Guard, and the powerful French cavalry. The intervention of Bulow prevented this; Zieten and Pirch turned a defeat into an appalling rout. But Grouchy ought to have made these results impossible; he is mainly responsible for what occurred at Waterloo. I have already indicated what the Marshal ought to have done: had he crossed the Dyle on the forenoon of the 18th, and made his way on the western bank, France would have been spared an immense disaster, very probably would have secured a victory; nay, had he not rejected the counsels of

[1] See the admirable remarks of Mr. Ropes, *Campaign of Waterloo*, p. 327.

Gérard, who, when the thunder of Waterloo was heard at Walhain, entreated his chief to hasten to the field, he would have at least averted the catastrophe that took place. But he persisted in marching on the eastern bank of the Dyle, thus permitting Blücher to join Wellington, and not even lending a hand to his master; he reached Wavre only to find Blücher gone; he merely fought an indecisive combat with Thielmann. Grouchy stands before the bar of impartial history as the true author of the frightful ruin of Waterloo.[1]

A well-informed survey of Wellington's career proves that, like Frederick, he did not excel in strategy. This was strikingly apparent in 1815, when the greatest of strategists met him in the field. He was outmanœuvred at the outset of the campaign; he ought to have been defeated on the 16th of June; he was in the gravest peril on the 17th; he risked too much in making a stand at Waterloo; he ought not to have weakened his army by leaving a large detachment at Hal. Yet he should not be judged as a strategist by his conduct in 1815; his veteran colleague forced his hand, especially by his advance to Sombreffe: had he been the commander of the two allied armies, he would probably have united them at Waterloo on the 17th of June; and Napoleon would have been defeated had he attacked. His real merit in this passage of arms was that of a consummate leader of men in battle;

[1] I have already noticed the best authorities on the operations of Grouchy. I would especially refer the reader to Ropes, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, pp. 245–288, and to H. Houssaye, "*1815*," ii., 485–494.

this largely atones for undoubted strategic errors. Justice, too, is due to his aged ally; Blücher made many and grave mistakes; but no other general of that age, not Wellington himself, would have so heroically risen superior to defeat, and would have made the most hazardous march from Wavre to Waterloo. With respect to Napoleon, the plan of his campaign was one of the finest ever thought out in war, and it was over and over again well-nigh successful, though his enemies were not far from twofold in numbers. No doubt the Emperor made a few mistakes; but in his operations in 1815 the extravagance of the Peninsular War and of 1812 and 1813 does not appear; the grandeur of the conception, and the scientific method characteristic of the first master of modern war, are manifest in their full completeness. Yet Napoleon met his ruin at Waterloo: nor is it difficult to ascertain the causes. Two or three times victory was within his grasp; but the lieutenants in whom he trusted failed him; Ney and Grouchy were instruments that broke in his hands; he was unequal to himself on the night of the 16th; his army, too, was not sufficiently strong: due allowance could not be made for mischances. The French army, besides, if it gave proof of heroic valour, on many occasions was an ill-organised and ill-disciplined army; the soldiery had little trust in their chiefs; the chiefs themselves were to a great extent demoralised. Nevertheless the splendour of Napoleon's genius in war shines out conspicuously in the campaign; nor has his renown, as he foretold would be the case, suffered.

CHAPTER X

THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION—ENTRANCE INTO POLITICAL LIFE

Wellington and Blücher invade France—Intrigues of Fouché to effect the restoration of Louis XVIII.—Napoleon practically deposed by the Chambers—Duplicity of Fouché—He paralyses the defence of Paris—Envoys sent to Wellington and Blücher—Hazardous advance of Blücher—Wisdom and moderation of Wellington—The capitulation of Paris—Great position of Wellington—He saves France from dismemberment, and does her other services—He commands the Army of Occupation—He enters political life in 1818, and is made Master of the Ordnance and Commander-in-Chief—The period from 1818 to 1827—Conduct of Wellington—His attitude to the Irish Catholic and other questions—His dispute with Canning.

WELLINGTON and Blücher at once invaded France, the victory of Waterloo had been so complete, though the other armies of the Coalition were still distant. The British General called in the detachment, which he had left at Hal, and advanced by the fortresses of the Somme; the Prussian Marshal, pressing more boldly forward, marched along the western bank of the Oise, leaving the corps of Pirch behind to conduct sieges. The object of the two chiefs was to make for Paris, and

to cut off the now isolated force of Grouchy, which had effected its retreat from Wavre to Givet, and was trying to reach the capital by the Aisne; the movement of its commander, if unduly extolled, was intelligent, energetic, and rapid, very different from his movements on the 17th and 18th of June. Meanwhile a revolution had broken out in the seat of power in France which had brought the Hundred Days to a close, and was attended with portentous results. Napoleon, at the instance of his chief officers, who had too truly told him that he had no army in his hands, had hastened to Paris to make an effort to obtain means to continue the war, and to defend the nation against an invasion now threatening its very existence as a State. He rightly said to his Council that the only chance of safety lay in the patriotic union of all Frenchmen, under the sovereign they had welcomed a few months before; and he wished to have a dictatorship, which would have given him unfettered power for a time. But France was enervated, divided, appalled by the late disaster; the Chambers, which he had just convened, regarded the Emperor with profound distrust, and were inspired by the revolutionary liberalism of the day: and at this crisis, they fell under the influence of one of the ablest and most unscrupulous intriguers of that age. Fouché had long been one of Napoleon's ministers; but he was convinced that his second reign could not last: he had plotted traitorously against him during the Hundred Days; after Waterloo he saw that a Bourbon restoration was at hand, and he aspired to be one of its principal

leaders. Under his guidance and that of Lafayette, an ideologist of 1789, the Chambers turned a deaf ear to Napoleon's requests; they practically deposed him by a sudden *coup d' état;* they extorted an abdication, nominally in favour of his son, which, he bitterly exclaimed, was a sorry delusion.

In a few days a kind of provisional government of France was set up; Fouché contrived artfully to be made its head; the one chance, and it was an almost hopeless chance, of resisting the armed League of Europe disappeared. Napoleon was relegated to hardly veiled captivity: he was abandoned as he had been in 1814; ere long he was on his way to St. Helena, the last scene of a strange, eventful history, unparalleled in the annals of mankind. The Provisional Government was largely composed of regicides; the Chambers were distinctly opposed to the Bourbons. They despatched envoys to Blücher and Wellington who, in the first instance, curtly refused the overtures that were made for an armistice; they issued proclamations calling on Frenchmen to rise up in arms, and to repeat the national efforts of 1792–94; as if the circumstances were not wholly different, and as if the shadow of a government sitting in Paris could be a second convention reviving the Reign of Terror. But Fouché judged the position of affairs correctly; he knew the Assembly, and the men he had to deal with; he allowed noisy patriotism to vent itself in clamour, indeed seemed to promote it in different ways; but with great tact and adroitness, and with duplicity skilfully concealed, he took care to paralyse every attempt to resist the

NAPOLEON BY A DYING CAMP FIRE.
(From a drawing by Charlet.)

invaders, and steadily plotted to restore Louis XVIII. to the throne; his real object was, in 1815, to play the part played by Talleyrand the year before. He refused to give arms to the population of Paris, already beginning to menace traitors; the old Jacobin terrified the Chambers with reports of a Jacobin rising; he did nothing to strengthen the fortified works begun around the capital. He placed Massena at the head of the National Guard of Paris, thus giving this force the sanction of an illustrious name; but Massena was no friend of the fallen Emperor; he had no thought but that of an inglorious repose, and of preserving the wealth he had amassed by rapine; the National Guard, composed of the timid bourgeoisie, was soon persuaded that its real and only mission was to maintain order. At the same time the astute and base intriguer convened a great council of marshals and generals, to whom he put questions as to the capacity of Paris to withstand an attack, and as to the favourable chances of a great national defence; such a council proverbially never fights; and though Davôut, Napoleon's late Minister of War, showed hesitation and made some ambiguous protests, the council reported in the negative to both questions, and by implication declared for the restoration of the King. Meanwhile Fouché had continued to send negotiators to the allied camp,—one, Vitrolles, a notorious partisan of the Bourbons, who had tried to raise armed levies against Napoleon in the South and was now released from Vincennes to do Fouché's bidding. Blücher and Wellington still rejected an armistice,

though some of Blücher's officers dropped pacific hints; the British commander, with characteristic wisdom, perceived that it might be possible to treat on conditions that would bring the war to an end. Louis XVIII. had joined his victorious army; his authority with the King was immense; he saw, and rightly saw, that the only hope for France was to restore the Bourbon dynasty to the throne, though he declared that there was no wish to force on the nation a government against its will. He indicated his thoughts to Fouché's envoys: these fell in with the arch-intriguer's views; but he also laid down the conditions which, in a military sense, must be complied with, before he could sheathe his sword.

It was strange that one of the greatest and one of the worst men of that time had accidentally agreed, though from different motives, in giving effect to the same policy at this grave conjuncture. Events singularly concurred to favour the object at which Wellington and Fouché aimed. Blücher had pressed forward far in advance of his colleague: their two armies had been many leagues apart; Napoleon, from his retreat at Malmaison, had in vain implored the Provisional Government to allow him to fall on the divided enemies; he might have gained a passing triumph, but it could have come to nothing; at all events Fouché had ideas of a very different kind. But nothing could stop the impetuous veteran; he marched on to Paris and crossed the Seine, to the southern bank, where the defences of the capital were quite unfinished; he gave out that he would shoot Napoleon, should he

have the chance; he threatened the Jacobin Chambers and the infidel city. This sent a thrill of indignation through the mass of the citizens, and even stirred the Chambers to wrath; they had the means of making the old Marshal feel their vengeance. Grouchy had reached Paris with most of his forces; the remains of the Waterloo army had been brought together and numbered perhaps twenty thousand men; large bodies of troops had been drawn from depots; volunteers had been suddenly enrolled; in short the capital was a very formidable object to attack. And though Wellington had ere long come into line with his ally, he only held the northern bank of the Seine; their armies were not one hundred and twenty thousand strong, and were dispersed over an immense space; their enemies stood between them with ninety thousand men, supported by a kind of great entrenched camp; the Prussians had been routed in a bloody combat; there was real danger of a conflict that might have the worst results. The wisdom, the moderation, the statesmanlike sense of Wellington were now conspicuously seen, and, happily for the estate of man, triumphed. He warned his colleague that the fate of Napoleon did not depend on generals in the field, but on their masters; he quietly deprecated acts of violence and revenge; he even informed Blücher that it was by no means certain that their united efforts would make Paris fall; at all events it was common prudence to wait for the support of the other allied armies. The passionate veteran yielded to these sagacious counsels; he felt the superior influence of

a calm but overmastering mind. In a very short time the conditions of Wellington were agreed to; the French armies were to retire behind the Loire: the Allies were to occupy Paris, but the National Guard was to act as the police of the city. It was understood that Louis XVIII. was to be restored; the King, in fact, entered the capital three weeks after Waterloo. Fouché, of course, gladly accepted these terms; he had played a hazardous game, and had won the stake; but his life had been in no doubtful peril; he had been loudly denounced as a false-hearted traitor.

The position of Wellington, at this juncture, was one of almost unexampled grandeur; he certainly was the foremost man in Europe. He was comparatively unknown, during the Peninsular War, though his operations had been watched and studied; he did not march to Paris in 1814; even at the Congress of Vienna he held a secondary place. But he had forestalled the Coalition in 1715; he had struck down Napoleon in a decisive battle; the glory of this was mainly and rightly ascribed to him. He had also practically restored the Bourbons, and had saved France from perhaps an internecine struggle; the Allies and Louis XVIII. owed everything to him. This was the splendid climax of his renowned career; no English subject, not Marlborough himself, has ever stood so high in the councils of Europe. During the three years that followed, he gave signal proof, in a situation glorious indeed but difficult, and which taxed his great powers to the utmost, of the far-seeing wisdom, the well-balanced

judgment, the moderation and the profound sagacity which were the distinctive features of his character on its intellectual side, but also of his sterling integrity and strong sense of duty, the most striking, perhaps, of his moral qualities; it was well for the world that it possessed such a man. The most important of his achievements, at this time, was that he prevented the dismemberment of France, and thus averted revolution for many years, and secured for the Continent a season of comparative repose. Every member of the Coalition in 1815 was eager for vengeance on a people which, since 1791, had disturbed and threatened the civilised world, and had carrried its victorious arms from Madrid to Moscow; ambition and prudence seemed alike to require that the territory of France should be largely diminished. Austria demanded the restitution of Alsace and Lorraine; Prussia declared that the Continent would not be safe until France had been cut up into separate kingdoms; the sovereign of Belgium and Holland, just made one state, insisted on having a new barrier, which would include the fortresses of Burgundian Artois: even Lord Liverpool, a timid and pacific statesman, thought that France should be reduced nearly within her limits before the Peace of Westphalia. Wellington steadily rejected these dangerous counsels; in a masterly correspondence he pointed out that peace was the great need of the Continent, and that this would be impossible were whole provinces torn from France; he laid stress also on the injustice of a policy of this kind; and he significantly

added that France still possessed more elements of military power than any state in Europe. His arguments were attended with success: no doubt other and potent reasons concurred: but it was chiefly due to the victor of Waterloo that France was not dismembered in 1815, a result very different from what was seen in 1870–71.

This, however, was not the only service done by Wellington to France in this eventful period. He prevented Blücher from destroying the bridge on the Seine, which commemorates the Prussian disaster of Jena. With Castlereagh and, in a lesser degree, with Nesselrode, he succeeded in cutting down the enormous charges made by the Coalition for its operations in 1815, when seven hundred thousand armed men were quartered on provinces of France. Another circumstance did him peculiar honour; his capacity in civil affairs had been recognised; he was placed at the head of a commission appointed to adjust the compensation due to the allied Powers for their losses caused by the Revolutionary wars and those of Napoleon. He acquitted himself of an Herculean task, involving inquiries difficult alike and delicate, with characteristic industry and tact; he reduced the compensation to a moderate sum; he negotiated a loan to enable France to discharge it. The great qualities he had shown in council, not less than his renown in the field, induced the Allies to give him the command of the Army of Occupation, as it was called, which, composed of not less than 150,000 men, of different nationalities and tongues, was charged with keeping the Revolution down in

France, and with propping up the throne of Louis XVIII. In this high office he won the respect of his subordinates, in every service, including our own; he maintained order and enforced discipline; but he was remarkably considerate and humane in the exercise of his immense authority. It is unnecessary to say that he refused the pay and emoluments offered him by foreign Powers; his ideas on this subject were strict and severe, and were formed on the noblest standards of duty; here he presents a striking contrast to Marlborough, unhappily not superior to evil corruption. France, it might have been thought, would have felt what she owed to Wellington, and now that the animosities of the day are dead her best historians have honourably avowed her debt. But he was unpopular with all classes from 1815 to 1818; the reasons are not difficult to seek. The King and the Court were under obligations too great to have a really friendly feeling for him; his antagonists in the field were sore and angry; indeed, he treated them more than once with a kind of dry discourtesy. Allowance, too, must be made for the wounded pride and susceptibilities of a great nation, which rightly saw in Wellington one of its chief conquerors; Waterloo was a humiliation not to be soon forgotten. Plots were again formed against the life of the Duke; whatever excuses may be made for it, Napoleon's legacy to Cantillon was an unworthy act, even though it was done in the agony of death. Wellington's conduct to Ney has been severely censured: perhaps he ought to have laid stress on the capitulation of Paris, the only real

defence for the ill-fated Marshal. But, technically, Ney's guilt could not be questioned, and justice was more akin to mercy in the nature of the great Englishman, a personality essentially stern and hard, and seldom swayed by emotions of any kind.

The Army of Occupation was disbanded in 1818; Wellington returned to England to receive new honours, and to hold a high place in the national councils. His great military reputation, the remarkable powers he had shown in the administration of civil affairs in India, in Portugal, in Spain, and in France, marked him out for distinction in the service of the State; the men in power were only too glad to secure such an ally. He entered the Cabinet of Lord Liverpool, and, as Master of the Ordnance and Commander-in-Chief, was in office until 1827. During this period England passed through immense changes in government, in administration, in public opinion, and in the conditions of public life; these present two marked and very striking phases. When Wellington joined the Ministry, Toryism of a peculiar kind was in the ascendent in our foreign and domestic policy; there was no immediate prospect that its long reign was coming to an end. The Tories had brought the great war to a triumphant close; the Whigs were discredited for their French sympathies. Tory statesmen, too, had had a part in effecting the settlement of the Continent made at Vienna; and if they gave no countenance to the Holy Alliance, and to Alexander's fantastic dreams, they had been associated with Metternich and other pillars of absolute monarchies. In affairs at home hardly any reforms

had been made, for the national mind had been engrossed by the war; the aristocracy of the land was supreme, and it was an exclusive and illiberal aristocracy of class; the House of Commons did not represent the nation; enormous abuses were allowed to flourish; legislation was far behind the requirements of the age; the criminal law was a disgrace to a civilised State; taxation was oppressive and unjust; the life of the ruling classes was selfish and frivolous; it had its image in the "First Gentleman of Europe," as George IV. was called with unconscious irony. At the same time vast and important interests had grown up within a recent period, and yet were of no account in the State; Birmingham and Manchester sent no members to Westminster; our colossal manufactures had been established, and with these the factory system; a teeming population had come into being, and this was often in extreme poverty. Things however, went on tolerably well until the close of the war turned the attention of thinkers to this position of affairs, and, above all, until a sudden and great fall of prices, reducing whole classes to sheer want, provoked general and widespread discontent. But the Tory Government had not understood the signs of the times: they applied coercion when they should have found remedies; they mistook disorganisation for sedition; they had recourse for years to measures of harsh severity to put down the rebellious spirit, as they called it, of evil-minded demagogues. The results were seen in suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act, in Peterloo riots, in Cato Street conspiracies, in criminal prosecutions

which disgraced their authors, and in the continuance of heavy and unfair taxation. The trial of Queen Caroline clearly brought out how fiercely popular feeling ran against the aristocracy and the monarch on the throne. England and Scotland, in fact, were in a critical state; many believed a revolution to be at hand.

The second phase of this period marks the beginning of a more auspicious era in the affairs of Great Britain. Not, indeed, that the changes of supreme importance which took place in the next generation had as yet been more than partly foreshadowed. England had not associated herself with Liberalism in foreign politics, nor had she made a close alliance with the France of Louis Philippe. The House of Commons remained unreformed; it was still the assembly of an oligarchy, and of a privileged class. The landed aristocracy as yet was dominant in the State; the interests of manufacture and commerce were comparatively without their legitimate influence, the institutions of the country still rested on too narrow a basis. Trade, too, was subject to most injurious restraints; the mass of the population was largely sunk in poverty; the tone of society in high places was hardly improved. But a better, a more enlightened, a more philanthropic spirit was animating the minds of most of our statesmen, and this had a powerful effect on the national life. Canning did not exactly break with Castlereagh's foreign policy; but, as Metternich clearly perceived, he gradually transformed it in a liberal sense, as was seen when his mantle fell on Palmerston. The Whigs slowly

regained their authority in the State; their leaders raised the cry of parliamentary reform erelong to swell into a national demand; they exposed the abuses of nomination and rotten boroughs, and denounced the corruption and scandals too often seen in the administration of affairs. The Ministry, too, became greatly improved; mediocrities were replaced by men like Peel and Huskisson; these perceived and to some extent carried out reforms absolutely essential to the national welfare, especially in relaxing the fetters on trade, and thus indirectly bettering the condition of the humbler classes; in mitigating the atrocity of the criminal law; in making justice more humane and popular. The distress besides, universal and acute, which had followed the collapse of the war prices, was diminished in a great measure by degrees; there were no doubtful signs of growing material progress. And with this improvement the hatreds and discords of class, which had separated by a wide gulf the rich from the poor, became much less than they had lately been, though too many signs of this great social evil remained. If the England and Scotland of 1826–27 were very different from the England and Sotland of the present day, they were not the discontented England and Scotland of 1816–20.

The changes of this period were also distinctly apparent in what Macaulay has aptly called "the withered and distorted limb of the Empire." The state of Ireland in 1818 and up to 1821 had, on the whole, not improved since the Union; in many respects it had become worse. Five-sixths of the

people were as disaffected as ever; they had the French sympathies of 1798; it was impossible to govern them without repressive measures. Protestant ascendency was supreme in the Church, in the State, in the Land; its evils had been aggravated by the Toryism of the time, and by the favour shown to the Orange societies, the embodiment of the extreme domination of race and sect. The administration of the Castle was not only exclusively Protestant,—it was harsh, narrow-minded, severe, bigoted; it was worse than it had been under the extinct Parliament in College Green. Nor had the representation of Ireland improved; it was, with few exceptions, selfish and corrupt, and confined to an oligarchy of creed; it had but little authority in the Imperial Parliament. As for the Irish Catholics, that is, the mass of the people, they remained all but outside the pale of the State; O'Connell, no doubt, had made his influence felt; but the cause of Catholic Emancipation, as it was called, though advocated by Grattan with great eloquence and power, seemed to have gone back, owing to Catholic disputes. The social condition, too, of the country made no progress; absenteeism had increased since the Union; landed relations formed on the ascendency of the Protestant gentry, and on the subjection of the Catholic peasantry, were essentially bad, and had perhaps become worse; disorders and outrages were widely prevalent; coercion was resisted, often successfully, by organised crime. The decline in prices, besides, at the close of the war had made the poverty of Ireland more

general and severe; teeming millions were on the brink of starvation; there were seasons of dearth and approaching famine. After 1821–22 there were signs of a change for the better in this sad state of things; Catholic Emancipation became the leading question of the day; it was advocated ably by the Whig party, it was supported in Parliament by suffrages steadily on the increase. The Catholic Association, too, was formed; O'Connell became the tribune of a people demanding justice; in fact, as early as 1825 Catholic Emancipation would have become law, under liberal and well-conceived conditions, but for the perverse bigotry of the Duke of York. And Protestant ascendency received a weighty blow; the Protestant Junta at the Castle was replaced by enlightened men of a very different type; Orangeism was made to feel that it was not above the law. Inquiry, too, was made into the social state of Ireland; the report of a committee that sat in 1824–25 has thrown a flood of light on this important subject. Much in the affairs of Ireland certainly remained very bad, especially in a vicious land system, and there was a great deal of social disorder, but the future seemed to be not without real promise.

I shall glance afterwards at Wellington's work in the army, during the long peace that followed the great war; for the present I shall notice his position in the State throughout the period I have briefly described. His antecedents, his character, his professional career, naturally identified him with the Tory party; he must always be regarded as a Tory

statesman. He was a scion of the Irish Protestant *noblesse*, an exclusive class of extreme Tory views,—divided from a subject people in race and faith; he had been a fast friend of Castlereagh, a thorough Tory: he had been associated in the most brilliant period of his life with the leading men of the Continental monarchies, of whom Metternich was the master spirit. His nature was unsympathetic and stern; far-seeing and sagacious as he was, he disliked and sometimes misunderstood popular demands and movements; his experiences in the Peninsula and in France made him an enemy of Revolutionary Democracy wherever it appeared. As a great soldier, too, he was fashioned to the habit of command; being almost unversed in parliamentary life, he thought that the State should be ruled like an army; he believed that a government should be essentially strong: he occasionally failed to perceive the power of the forces political, social, and economic, which may affect a nation under a constitutional régime, and even to interpret the signs of the time. Yet he was never a bigoted and narrow-minded Tory of the bad school of the successors of Pitt; his wisdom, his prudence, his saving common-sense, usually taught him when the course of the vessel of the State required to be changed and adapted to the exigencies of the hour; and he possessed in a very high degree the capacity of true Conservatism in the best sense of the word; he was never Quixotic, he was, as a rule, enlightened. And thus it was that he continued in office supporting the Government with an authority on the increase

during the two phases of the period to which I have referred. He held that the Six Acts and drastic legislation of the kind were unavoidable in the existing condition of England; he repeatedly condemned the violent agitators of the day. He also insisted on the maintenance of order, whatever the cost; turned a deaf ear to clamour on this subject; laid down excellent regulations for the preservation of the public peace; defended functionaries who had fearlessly done their duty, despite parliamentary and popular protests. He voted, too, with his party during the trial of the Queen, and even exposed himself to some special odium; but it is tolerably certain that he disapproved of the conduct of the King, and that he thought the whole proceedings unwise. Nevertheless, even in those days of Toryism well-nigh uncontrolled, he did not always sanction his colleagues' acts and measures; and it is very remarkable that he strongly urged that Canning should be recalled to office, and should give a more liberal tone to our foreign policy.

Two tendencies may be clearly seen in the Liverpool Cabinet after 1822, that is, during the second part of this important period. There was a real Tory and a real Liberal party, and though these remained united until the disappearance of their chief, they were divided on many of the questions of the day. Wellington remained a Tory, but became a moderate Tory; he gradually inclined to the more enlightened policy of the rising generation of statesmen. Thus in foreign affairs he did not like the recognition of the insurgent Spanish Colonies: he had

no sympathy with the struggle of the Greeks for independence. But, on the whole, he co-operated loyally with Canning for years: he carried out the Minister's views at Verona, and did excellent service at that Congress; he endeavoured to prevent the Bourbon invasion of Spain, undertaken to maintain the sinister power of Ferdinand; he averted for a time a war between Nicholas and the Turk. In domestic affairs he upheld the existing Corn laws, supposed to be a mainstay of the aristocracy of the land; he steadily set his face against reform in Parliament. But he advocated most of Huskisson's fiscal and commercial measures, all tending to the expansion of trade, and to the prosperity of the nation as a whole; he cordially supported the mitigation of the bad criminal law and the establishment of a police force in England and Ireland, one of the best achievements of Peel in those days. His attitude towards Ireland and Irish affairs was characteristic of his sagacious wisdom. He was a member of the dominant Protestant caste; but as Chief Secretary, many years before, he had seen that Protestant ascendency was a dangerous state of things, and he gave his full sanction to the important change which removed the extreme Protestant Junta from the Castle, and checked the arrogance of Orangeism and its sectarian tyranny. His brother, Lord Wellesley, indeed, had, as Lord Lieutenant, inaugurated this most salutary reform; it became the precursor of a new era in the consideration and treatment of Irish affairs. As to the Catholic question, now in the forefront of politics, Wellington had no thought of

heroic remedies: he wished to preserve what was called the Protestant Settlement in the Church, the State, and landed relations; he was opposed to Catholic Emancipation as a somewhat hazardous policy, and as placing the Irish Catholics in a position that might become dangerous to the institutions under which they lived. But he had no objection to Catholics on the ground of their faith; he was wholly free from the ideas of Eldon and Percival; he had the good sense to perceive when coercion must give place to concession in the government and administration of Catholic Ireland. The Catholic Association, founded by O'Connell in 1823–24, had soon practically superseded the authority of the law and of the men in office in Dublin in three-fourths of Ireland; in Canning's words it had formed a State within the State: it was far more powerful than the Land or the National Leagues of a much later day. Wellington, able in council as he had been in the field, knew when a position had become untenable: he took a prominent part in advocating the Compromise of 1825, largely founded on the Irish policy of Pitt: it was most unfortunate that this measure never became law.

A very striking feature in Wellington's career in this period was the authority he acquired over leading public men. This, indeed, was largely due to his military renown: but it was also caused by a conviction that he was a servant of the State of extraordinary merit and worth, and a politician of no mean order: we must bear in mind that he owed his eminence to himself; he did not belong to one

of the great ruling families. This influence was perhaps most clearly seen, and not without a comical touch, in the ascendency he exercised over George IV.; he disliked the King and was disliked by him, but he treated him as a kind of royal puppet, and he kept him out of a great deal of mischief. Peel was the statesman to whom he was most nearly allied, though he was, perhaps, never one of Peel's intimate friends; this alliance had memorable results in a troubled period now close at hand. In 1827 he unfortunately broke with Canning, when Canning had been unexpectedly made head of the State; this was one of the most remarkable mistakes of his political life. He distrusted a great deal of Canning's policy; but the real reason that he would not hear of being his colleague was not mere envy and jealousy, as has been said, but that he believed Canning to be false and insincere, and that he detested his somewhat questionable parleys with the Whigs. Yet certainly he gave proofs of faults of temper; he ought not to have thrown up the great office of Commander-in-Chief on grounds that cannot be fairly justified; this office did not depend on the fate of a Ministry. But in truth Canning and Wellington were men of opposite natures; the brilliant orator, emotional, enthusiastic, optimistic, vain, was a striking contrast to the sound-headed, calm-minded, stout-hearted soldier, seldom swayed by sympathies of any kind.

CHAPTER XI

PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND

The Administration of Canning—Hopes formed as regards his policy—Death of Canning—The Goderich Ministry a mere stopgap—Wellington becomes Prime Minister—General belief that his Government would be permanent—Hill made Commander-in-Chief of the army—Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—Huskisson and the followers of Canning leave the Ministry—Vesey Fitzgerald—O'Connell stands for Clare—The Clare election—Great results—Catholic Emancipation a necessity of State—Policy of Peel and of Wellington—Great difficulties in their way—The Emancipation Bill carried—Political consequences—Indignation of the high Tory party and of Protestant England—The question of Reform pressed to the front—Distress—Revolutions in France and in Belgium—The Reform movement adopted by the Whig party—Unwise speech of Wellington—Fall of his Government—Lord Grey and the Whigs in office.

THE conflict between the old and the new ideas, which had been apparent in the Liverpool Cabinet, broke out at once when Canning became Prime Minister. The quarrel with Wellington, partly due to personal dislike, was followed by the resignations of the leading Tories, of whom Peel was the most conspicuous. Peel, though in no sense an extreme Tory, had always opposed the

Catholic cause, of which Canning had been the most distinguished advocate, at least since the death of the illustrious Grattan. Canning was forced to look for support to the Whig party; he placed several of its chiefs in office; and though he was sustained by the mass of the Tories in the House of Commons, these did not fully confide in him; his Government had the inherent weakness of a Coalition Government. Great hopes were formed that the brilliant and enlightened statesman would inaugurate a new order of things in England; but these were dissipated by his sudden and untimely death; had he lived they would probably not have been fulfilled. The great Tory aristocracy distrusted Canning; they looked down on him as a plebeian upstart; the majority were averse to him on the Catholic question. He had incurred the special dislike of Lord Grey, the champion of the High Whig *noblesse;* and though he had for the moment the support of the Whigs, he had always denounced Parliamentary reform, soon to be the rallying cry of the whole Whig party. He had not besides much personal hold in the nation; and his foreign policy was detested by Continental statesmen, who had still much influence on the Tories in England. He was succeeded by an obscure member of the Liverpool Ministry, who held office for a few months only, and was universally felt to be a mere stop-gap. The Government of Lord Goderich was also a Coalition Government composed partly of Tories and partly of Whigs; it did little or nothing during its brief existence. Wellington returned to the com-

mand of the army, a tolerably clear proof that he left that post on account of the feelings he entertained towards Canning; but he stood aloof from the Goderich Ministry; he truly remarked that it had neither power nor principle. The Whigs also fell away from their nominal leader; after some hesitation, George IV. had recourse to Wellington, the most famous of living Englishmen, who naturally was placed at the head of the State, but probably against the secret wishes of the King, who dreaded the authority of a domineering mentor.

Wellington was now on the verge of his sixtieth year; he was in the fulness of his ripe experience, and of his powerful faculties. The opinion prevailed abroad and at home, that after a succession of weak Governments, his administration would be as lasting as that of the second Pitt, that is from 1784 to 1801. He had no rival in military fame: he was the only surviving British statesman who had taken anything like a conspicuous part in the settlement of the Continent in 1814 and 1815. He had been the colleague and the fast friend of Castlereagh; and though he had backed Canning in parts of that Minister's policy, he had separated himself from Canning in 1827. He had been cordially received at the Russian Court by Nicholas, now becoming the first of Continental rulers; he stood well with Charles X. of France: he was still recognised as one of the chiefs of the old League of Europe. His influence on the Continent, in a word, was immense; his position in domestic politics seemed completely secure. He was at the head of the great Tory

following, still in possession of scarcely interrupted power; but he had associated himself with the prudent Tories, who were not hostile to the spirit of the age; the ablest certainly of these was Peel, who under him, had become the leader of the House of Commons. His tenure of office, besides, seemed not to be threatened by any of the immediate questions of the day, or by the prospect of impending social troubles. He was now opposed to the Catholic claims, because he believed they could not be settled in the existing condition of English parties; but he had never resisted them on grounds of principle; and he had tried to effect the compromise of 1825. He was an adversary of Parliamentary reform, but this great question, if plainly making its way, had not yet reached the first place in politics; indeed it was not deemed of much real, practical moment. The country, too, was in the main progressing; agriculture and commerce were not unprosperous; there were few signs of widespread discontent; and Wellington, now universally known as "the Duke," if not popular, was justly esteemed by the nation. His Government therefore promised to be of long duration; it had the appearance of complete stability. But it fell on extraordinarily difficult times; it was destined to lead to a great constitutional change, and to cause the break-up of the dominant Tory party; to encounter a revolutionary movement at home, made worse by general and acute distress, and a violent revolutionary movement abroad; to make the long-discredited Whigs the depositories of power, and to

SIR ROBERT PEEL.
(From the painting by John Linnell, in the National Portrait Gallery.)

transfer it practically, for a time, to the middle classes in the State: and finally to succumb, after a few months, amidst indignation not wholly undeserved, and a tempest of popular passion, which shook the institutions of England to their base.

The Government of Wellington was not originally a purely Tory Government; it comprised four of Canning's distinguished followers, men of liberal and enlightened views, for liberal ideas were steadily increasing in strength. The command of the army was conferred on Hill, perhaps the ablest companion in arms of the Duke; all seemed full of certain promise for a time. The Test and Corporation Acts, bad legacies of the seventeenth century, which imposed galling restrictions on Nonconformists, were repealed; it deserves notice that Wellington refused to sanction an indirect attempt to subject Catholics to further disabilities in the State. A rift, however, soon appeared in the lute; a compromise was effected in the exclusive Corn Law, but dissensions broke out on a greater subject. The Tories in the Cabinet desired to transfer the seats of two corrupt boroughs, that had been forfeited, to parts of the adjoining counties: Huskisson voted for giving them to the great towns of Birmingham and Manchester, still unrepresented in the House of Commons; his resignation of his office was somewhat curtly accepted by his chief. The three other disciples of Canning—of these Palmerston was the most eminent—thinking their colleague wronged, went out of office with him; the Administration became wholly of a Tory complexion; one of the ministerial

changes that ensued had memorable results. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald was appointed to the Board of Trade, his re-election to his native county of Clare was considered to be a foregone conclusion: his father had been a friend of Grattan: he was a staunch advocate of the Catholic cause; the landed gentry of his county were on his side, to a man; and hitherto, as in other parts of Ireland, they had been masters of the votes of the peasant masses, enfranchised by the measure of 1793. But great events, ill understood in Downing Street, had been for some time taking place in Ireland: a movement of extraordinary force had been let loose which was sweeping away the old political landmarks. The failure of the arrangement of 1825 had incensed O'Connell; the agitation he had set on foot acquired sudden and enormously increased power; at the general election of 1826, Protestant ascendency received another weighty blow. The Catholic Association, already a danger to the State, already subverting the law of the land, became absolutely supreme throughout the South of Ireland: it was backed by the immense authority of the Catholic Church; it formed a kind of government which made its mandates obeyed. O'Connell conceived the bold design of opposing Fitzgerald at the Clare election, though, as a Catholic, he could not sit in the House of Commons; the power of the Association was concentrated in his hands; the result was never for a moment doubtful. At the instigation of local leaders, in every district, and at the bidding of their clergy, who from their altars called on them to rise on behalf of freedom

and their faith, the Clare peasantry broke away from their landlords: the feudal ties which had bound them snapped in a moment; O'Connell was returned by an immense majority of votes; the triumph of the Association and of the great tribune was complete.

A violent revolution now appeared imminent throughout Ireland, and in all her provinces. The Clare election had a portentous influence; in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught the peasantry joined in the revolt; in many places they refused to pay rents or tithes, as had happened before the rising of 1798. Catholic Ireland, in a word, was in an insurrectionary state; and though the Association and O'Connell denounced crime and outrage, there was widespread disorder that seemed impossible to repress. At the same time Orangeism lifted up its head in frenzy, and threatened to have its revenge on its foes: and though the great body of the Protestant landed gentry declared that concessions must be made, Protestant Ulster wore a dangerous aspect. There were incessant rumours of a bloody civil war: and if the Catholic leaders preached peace, they had the fortunes of Ireland in their hands; a word from O'Connell might have inaugurated a Reign of Terror. In these circumstances Peel, at the head of the Home Office, and largely responsible for Irish affairs, perceived that the settlement of the Catholic question had become necessary for the safety of the State, and did not hesitate to avow this belief to his leader. Peel had for many years opposed the Catholic claims on the ground that they

were incompatible with the political and social system that prevailed in Ireland; he properly offered to retire from his post, but when he had convinced Wellington that his views were correct, he patriotically agreed to act with him, and to give Catholic Emancipation effect. By adopting this course he was no doubt throwing political consistency to the winds, and so in a certain degree was the Duke; but the welfare of the Commonwealth was at stake; and—a fact that should be carefully borne in mind—Wellington and Peel were the only statesmen who could have carried a concession of this kind through Parliament; the Whig party would not have had a chance of success. The difficulties, however, in their way, were prodigious; George IV. and his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, were furious in their anti-Catholic zeal; the Tory majority in the House of Commons, and three-fourths probably of the aristocracy of the land, resented a policy they deemed truckling and unwise; the House of Lords and the Church were distinctly adverse. The nation, besides, was indignant at what O'Connell had achieved; it despised the Irish Catholics as an inferior race; Protestant feeling ran high against the Irish priesthood; the Nonconformists especially were vehement in their bigoted language. Had an appeal to the country been made at this crisis, Catholic Emancipation would never have been granted by an unreformed Parliament.

Peel and Wellington had soon agreed to their project; the Duke had more enlightened views than his colleague; as had been the case with Pitt at the

Union, he wished to make a provision for the Irish priesthood, a salutary and far-sighted policy. But how to give effect to the measure was the great question, having regard to the formidable obstacles in the way. The Duke acted as he had acted more than once in the field, he carefully masked the large change of front he was making; he gave no open countenance to the Catholic claims; he even removed from office one of their leading advocates. He has been angrily blamed for concealing his purpose, and for not making it known to the heads of his party, but it is more than doubtful whether his position would have been improved by such a disclosure. He had soon thrust the Duke of Cumberland aside; but when the Emancipation Bill was explained to the King, George IV. refused his assent in passionate phrases; it was not until the Ministers had resigned that he yielded to an ascendency of which he stood in awe, and sullenly agreed to acquiesce in the measure. The bill was brought into the House of Commons in the session of 1829, and was supported by Peel in a masterly speech; but it was not so conciliatory or comprehensive a scheme as might have been expected. The Catholic claims were indeed satisfied, if with somewhat unwise exceptions; it can hardly be denied that as affairs stood, the Catholic Association was rightly suppressed, and the Irish peasant masses were rightly deprived of the franchise. But there was no provision for the commutation of the tithe in Ireland, a reform in the minds of our best statesmen for years; the Irish Catholic priests were left out in the

cold; O'Connell was not permitted to take his seat for Clare, an instance of want of tact for which Peel was responsible. The measure, in a word, fell short of the proposals of 1825, but it passed the House of Commons, partly owing to the assistance of the Whigs, and partly to a majority still possessed by the Government: it was forced through the House of Lords by Wellington's overpowering influence. The nation, however, was deeply stirred; a furious outcry against the Ministry arose, increasing day after day in volume. The extreme Tories declared they had been deceived and betrayed: the oligarchy, so potent in the House of Commons, pronounced in many instances against the Government; the Tory party seemed rapidly falling to pieces. The signs of the times revealed themselves in the rejection of Peel, her favourite son, by Oxford, and in the ludicrous passage of arms between the Duke and Lord Winchelsea. The prejudices and the pride of Englishmen were also enlisted against the men in office; they had tamely surrendered to Irish Papists, and to a noisy and obscure Irish demagogue; they had humiliated and disgraced England; was this to have been expected from the victor of Waterloo?

Catholic Emancipation was the greatest achievement of Wellington in the sphere of politics. He saw that a great change in Ireland could not be avoided; he seized the occasion with characteristic judgment; he overcame difficulties from which weaker men would have shrunk; he gave conspicuous proof of his indomitable will; he prevented

a revolution that must have endangered the State. Nevertheless the measure Parliament enacted had faults and defects; it has had consequences that have left their mark on our history. The concession of the Catholic claims was the triumph of agitation organised with marvellous skill; agitation, before without much strength in England, became thenceforward a mighty force in her politics; the Catholic Association was the parent of the Birmingham Union, of the Anti-Corn-Law League, of the Chartist movement: it gave an immense impulse to Democracy in many of its forms. Catholic Emancipation too, accomplished without the proper safeguards contained in the scheme of 1825, and effected in a tumult of popular passion, all but destroyed the influence of the Irish landed gentry, and deeply affected the settlement of the Irish land: it introduced, besides, into the national councils a faction which has had a great deal too much power, which ought to have been kept within closer limits, and which has played a sinister part in the affairs of the Empire. The measure, moreover, fathered by Wellington and Peel, greatly shook confidence in public men; it not only shattered the ties of party, it seemed a gross violation of the most solemn pledges; it had results akin to those caused by the coalition of Fox and North. But its most immediate, if not its most lasting effect, was that it gave a sudden and powerful impulse to a movement hitherto almost in the background, but now rapidly and portentously brought to the front. It has often been remarked that

Englishmen do not like to deal with two important questions in politics at the same time; when Catholic Emancipation had been put out of the way, Parliamentary reform began to engross the national mind. And the animosities, the passions, the divisions, the distrust, engendered in 1828–29, from the highest down to the lowest classes, did not conduce to an easy, even to a wise settlement of Parliamentary reform.

Having successfully carried the Emancipation Bill through Parliament, in a great measure through his personal influence, Wellington endeavoured to strengthen his forces in both Houses, which, he must have felt, had been much weakened. He was confident in his own position, and in that of his Government: it should be remembered that he was less an object of party and popular odium than Peel, who had been more deeply pledged against the Catholic claims, and whose cold, cautious, and reserved manner contrasted unfavourably with his superior's bold, frank, and soldierlike bearing. The Duke, however, seems hardly to have gauged the power of the formidable combination arrayed against him, composed as it was of many diverse but most potent elements. A large minority of the Tories denounced his Government; the Whigs, though they had supported him on the Catholic question, regarded him with growing envy and dislike, and were irritated that they had been kept out of office; Protestant England largely condemned him for his late conduct. Besides, some of his appointments to high places in the State were bad; and the dictatorial attitude he

had been almost compelled to assume provoked a good deal of discontent in Parliament. Nevertheless he went steadily to work to improve his position: he made overtures to the Whigs, which, if coldly received for the moment, might in other circumstances not have been fruitless; he endeavoured to rally to his side many wavering and recalcitrant Tories. This balanced strategy, as it has aptly been called, might have succeeded had its author had time, and had not a series of conditions become suddenly adverse. As has repeatedly been seen in the affairs of Ireland, the immense concessions just made to the Catholics did not bring peace or allay trouble; sedition and agitation were more than ever rampant; disorder and crime distinctly multiplied; Catholic Emancipation, it was loudly asserted, had proved a failure; this told with no little effect on the Ministry. Simultaneously there were at least two bad harvests; in the three kingdoms every interest connected with the land suffered; this reacted on manufactures and commerce, more dependent then upon agriculture than in the present age. In several counties it became impossible to pay rent; the poor-rates ate up the produce of the soil; the wages of labour fell to starvation point; factories were shut up and furnaces blown out in many towns, lately thriving centres of industry and trade. Widespread and severe distress followed: the results appeared in dangerous movements in parts of the country, in angry popular risings, in incendiary fires, in savage deeds of violence, in organised outrages. All this increased and exasperated political

discontent, and produced a general feeling in favour of a great change in the State; even in Parliament the Government was fiercely denounced, when it was declared in the Speech from the Throne in 1830, that practically little or nothing could be done to remove or even to lessen the many ills which afflicted the nation.

The cry for Parliamentary reform already loudly heard and greatly increased by the prevailing distress, now became passionate, intense, general: the existing Parliament, it was proclaimed, would not do its duty or attempt to improve the state of the country; many of the Tories renounced the opinions they had held, and became reformers even in an extreme sense, partly in order to harass and vex the Government. The movement was immensely strengthened by movements abroad, which, turned to account by popular leaders, made a profound impression on the national mind in England. A reactionary minister of Charles X. issued ordinances which suspended the constitution in France, and practically destroyed the liberty of the press; Paris rose up in indignant wrath; the army took the side of the multitude; the Bourbon dynasty was driven from the throne; the Duke of Orleans was made King; democracy gained a decisive triumph. At the same time, Belgium, linked to Holland by an unnatural tie, threw off an allegiance detested by nearly all classes; part of the settlement made at Vienna was undone; a democratic revolution again triumphed. These events told powerfully against the Duke and his Ministry; he was identified by

his political foes, by demagogues, and by the Radical press with the policy of Metternich, and of Castlereagh; he was a champion of absolutism on the Continent; he was a dangerous man to be at the head of affairs in England. Just at this time too, George IV. died; his successor, William IV., was known to have liberal views; and though he made no change in Wellington's Government, it was loudly announced that he favoured reform in Parliament. At the general election which followed the demise of the Crown, seat after seat was lost to the Ministry; in fact, England pronounced against it; the abuses prevalent under the existing order of things, the anomalies, the iniquities, the intolerable state of representation, which did not express the will of the nation, and was the monopoly of an oligarchy, selfish and corrupt, were subjects of invective at every husting; country and town echoed with a universal demand for a thorough reform of a bad Parliament; this was urged by forces evidently of extraordinary strength. The Whigs who had for years made this policy their own, but who had hitherto failed to give it effect, perceived their opportunity and cleverly seized it; they placed themselves at the head of the popular movement: Parliamentary reform was made their principal watchword. Their success was seen in the triumphant return of Brougham for York: and the country was organised to promote the cause. In Birmingham, in Manchester, in other important towns, nay, even in several rural districts, associations were formed to bring the mighty change

about which was to inaugurate a new era in England.

A violent revolution appeared at hand; some of the leading Whigs, essentially an aristocratic class, afraid of the ominous signs of the times, made overtures to Wellington in order to join his Government, and to effect a compromise on the question of Reform. These parleys, however, proved useless; events were precipitated by a very untoward incident. When Parliament had met after the late election, Lord Grey, the recognised head of the Whigs, brought forward the subject in a temperate speech. "You see," he said, "the danger around you; the storm is on the horizon, but the hurricane approaches. Begin, then, at once to strengthen your houses, to secure your windows, and to make fast your doors. The mode by which this must be done, my lords, is by securing the affections of your fellow-subjects, and I pronounce the word—by reforming Parliament." The earnest appeal was wise and statesmanlike: the reply of Wellington, peremptory, curt, nay, offensive, was an emphatic protest against any measure of reform. "I have never read or heard," he declared, "of any measure up to the present moment, which can in any degree satisfy my mind that the state of the representation can be improved, or be rendered more satisfactory than it is at present. . . . I am fully convinced that the country already possesses a legislature which answers all the purposes of a good legislature. . . . I will go further and say that the legislature and the present system of representation possess the

full and entire confidence of the country. . . . I will go still further and say that if at the present moment I had imposed on me the duty of forming a legislature for my country, and particularly for a country like this, in possession of great property of many descriptions, I do not mean to assert that I should form such a legislature as you possess now, for the nature of man is incapable of reaching such excellence at once, but my great endeavour would be to form some description of legislature which would produce the same results. . . . I am not only not prepared to bring in any measure of the description alluded to by the noble lord, but I will at once declare, that as far as I am concerned, so long as I hold any station in the government of the country, I shall always feel it my duty to resist such measures when proposed by others."

The nation had distinctly pronounced for reform: the new House of Commons had been elected to dispose of the question. England was incensed with the minister, who had crossed her will, and with an audacity alien to his real character had, without hesitation, defied her opinions. A sudden tempest of indignation swept over the country, one of those outbursts of popular passion often seen in its history, like the frenzy of the Popish Plot and of the Exclusion Bill, like the wrath aroused by revolutionary and regicide France. Disorders and outrages rapidly increased; attacks on property were made in many places; Reform became an insurrectionary cry; the institutions of the kingdom were held up to odium; the landed aristocracy and all that pertained

to it were savagely decried at angry public meetings. "London," it is said, "became like the capital of a country devastated by cruel war or foreign invasion." The Duke boldly confronted the crisis; he took strong measures to enforce the public peace, he barricaded his mansion of Apsley House; he called on the landed gentry in every county to uphold order. But nothing could stem the universal torrent; his Government was swept away on a minor question; Lord Grey and the Whigs came into office on the crest of a revolutionary wave, pledged to carry a great measure of Parliamentary reform. Wellington left his post censured and decried even by moderate men; for a time he was the most unpopular man in these kingdoms. A singularly well-informed and calm-minded observer has placed on record in these words, how his late conduct had alienated men of all parties, and even the great majority of the people of England: "With his Government falling every day in public opinion, and his enemies growing more numerous and confident, with questions of vast importance rising up with a vigour and celerity of growth which astonished the world, he met a new Parliament (constituted more unfavourably than the last, which he had found himself unable to manage), without any support, but in his own confidence and the encouraging adulation of a little knot of devotees. There still lingered around him some of that popularity which had once been so great, and which the recollection of his victories would not suffer to be altogether extinguished. . . . But it was decreed that he should fall. He appeared bereft

of all judgment and discretion, and after a King's speech which gave great, and I think unnecessary, offence, he delivered the famous philippic against Reform which sealed his fate. From that moment it was not doubtful, and he was hurled from the seat of power amid universal acclamations."[1]

To this generation it may appear amazing that Parliament had not been reformed long before this period; its defects had been perceived by Cromwell and Chatham. The old House of Commons did not represent the nation, save in a very indirect and imperfect way; the landed aristocracy had far too much power in it; there was no representation of most important towns; nomination, rotten, and close boroughs secured for privileged classes a bad influence; the anomalies and vices of the system were prodigious and glaring. Yet Burke and Canning had always defended this order of things; the statesmen who had beheld the French Revolution, nay, many of their successors, dreaded organic change in a Constitution, even as it was, very much the best in Europe. The antipathy of Wellington to Parliamentary reform was due partly to his political faith and partly to the peculiar circumstances of the time. If not a mere Tory bigot, he was not less a Tory; he wished to see the aristocracy of the land the chief power in the State; that "the King's Government should be strong" seemed to him essential; these great objects he thought practically secure under our old Parliamentary régime. Nor had he any real

[1] Greville, *Memoirs*, ii., 84–85.

knowledge of the Great Britain of manufacture and commerce, and of the great interests which had been growing up for years and yet had very little weight in public affairs; he failed to understand the changed conditions of the national life; he did not correctly discern the signs of the time. He was rather a martinet than a thinker in the political sphere, and reform seemed to him especially dangerous, when democracy was gaining triumphs abroad, and was making rapid and threatening progress at home; he was not wholly in error when, in 1829–30, he believed the season was unpropitious for making an immense experiment in all that related to the institutions of the State. These considerations partly excuse the attitude he took at this important juncture; nevertheless his speech in reply to Lord Grey was intemperate, unwise, unworthy of him,—it was one of the few great mistakes of his career.

CHAPTER XII

FROM 1830 TO 1841

The Grey Government—It introduces the Reform Bill—Progress of the measures brought in—Wellington called upon to form an administration—He fails—The Reform Bill becomes law—Characteristics of the measure—Wellington steadily opposes it all through—Agitated and critical state of England—The Duke's life exposed to danger—The first Reformed Parliament—Fall of the Government of Lord Grey—Lord Melbourne Prime Minister—William IV. changes his Ministry and places Wellington at the head of affairs—His patriotic conduct—Peel Prime Minister—His first short administration—The Melbourne Government restored to office—Wise and moderate attitude of Wellington in opposition—Death of William IV.—Accession of Queen Victoria—Soult in England—Feebleness of the Melbourne Government—Wellington and Peel, who had been estranged, are completely reconciled — Fall of the Melbourne Government—Peel Prime Minister.

THE Government of Lord Grey, which succeeded that of the Duke, was composed partly of aristocratic Whigs and partly of late adherents of Canning; it was well for England that, at a grave crisis, she did not fall into the hands of demagogues. This is not the place to examine at length the memorable events which, continuing for many months, wrought a complete change in the unreformed Parlia-

ment, and transformed the old political system of these realms amidst shocks and troubles that seemed to imperil the State. The first Reform Bill, introduced by Lord John Russell, passed the second reading in the House of Commons by a majority of one; but the Ministers were beaten in committee, and appealed to the country. The new House of Commons pronounced decisively for a second bill; but this was summarily rejected by the House of Lords, which denounced the measure as fatal to the Constitution and the national welfare. The people of Great Britain, already with difficulty restrained, and incensed at seeing its will thwarted, rose in several districts in angry outbreaks; ominous signs of social disorder appeared; many thinking and moderate men believed that England was going the way of France in 1789–91. The Ministers, however, persisted in their course; they brought forward a third Reform Bill, to which the House of Commons, of course, gave its sanction: a party called "the Waverers" had been formed in the House of Lords, which dreaded the aspect of the time, and wished for a compromise; in a great degree owing to this influence the second reading passed the House of Lords by a small majority. But the measure was defeated in committee again; Lord Grey and his colleagues resigned office; William IV., who had become terrified at the condition of affairs, called on Wellington to form a new Government. This attempt, however, completely failed; the Grey Ministry returned to power: the House of Lords sullenly assented to the third Reform Bill, largely from dread of a great creation of

peers, to which, it was said, the King had agreed. Parliamentary reform became at last the law of the land; a real danger to the State had been averted. It is impossible in this brief sketch to describe the organic change in the Constitution which had been thus effected, or even to dwell on its momentous results. The three Reform Bills were substantially the same; they were not without grave and palpable defects. They swept away popular franchises in some boroughs; they made the franchise they created too uniform; they confined it too much to a single class: the farmers in the counties were enfranchised by a mere accident. But, to a very considerable extent at least, they removed the abuses which had made the House of Commons the instrument of an oligarchic caste; they got rid of a number of nomination, close, and rotten boroughs; they gave Manchester, Birmingham, and other great towns the representation to which they had a right; and while they deprived the aristocracy of illegitimate power, they left most of its indirect authority unimpaired. On the whole, they added greatly to the influence of the trading and middle classes in the State, but this the facts of the situation required; and that influence was not to become excessive, as time was before long to prove. And though essentially democratic in their tendencies, they did not let democracy run riot; they left the most vital parts of the Constitution intact.

Wellington resisted reform with the steady perseverance he had exhibited on many a hard-fought field. His perfect sincerity cannot be doubted; the

measure, he was convinced, would prove the ruin of the State; it would make the stable administration of affairs impossible; it would destroy the aristocracy, perhaps overthrow the monarchy. In these views he was certainly wrong; yet they were quite as conscientiously held by Peel, the leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, and by many of the eminent men of the time, astonishing as this may appear to the generation in which we live. The Duke had no patience with the "Waverers"; he regarded them as deserters in the face of the enemy; he turned a deaf ear to any thought of compromise. Undoubtedly he made an earnest attempt to form a Ministry when Lord Grey resigned; but Peel, very properly, would not consent to introduce a Reform Bill similar to that which he had steadily condemned. Catholic Emancipation, he insisted, was quite a different case. This caused a temporary estrangement between the two men; but Peel certainly took the right course; the Duke's argument that a Government should be formed "to save the King," even at the heavy price of reform, cannot bear examination and was self-deception. It deserves notice that in opposing reform, the Duke rallied again all the Tories around him; the events of 1829 were forgotten; but this was by no means the case with Peel; he was still regarded with a good deal of distrust. During these agitated months Wellington's unpopularity passed all bounds; he was held up to execration by demagogues and an incendiary press; more than once his life was in danger from the savage mob of London. Yet he pursued

his course with the tenacity characteristic of him; he set an example to Englishmen which it is impossible not to admire. Much as he disliked the Ministry of Lord Grey, he co-operated loyally with it in maintaining order wherever it was disturbed; he repeatedly warned his party that its first duty was to support the "King's Government," and never to try to gain a factious triumph. This truly patriotic conduct had an immense effect; Whigs and Tories united in defence of the State and the laws; it distinctly checked much that was most dangerous in the Reform movement. It should be added that, except in a few instances, the Ministry acted as became statesmen, and kept anarchy effectually down: that the aristocracy when attacked showed courage and spirit, and that the nation gradually returned to the ways of moderation and common sense. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that when the first Reformed Parliament met, in the beginning of 1833, the balance of the Constitution seemed perilously disturbed and Parliamentary Government brought well-nigh to a deadlock. The Ministry had such an immense majority, that it appeared to possess irresistible power; the Tory party in the House of Commons was a mere forlorn hope; the House of Lords, humiliated and defeated, was held of little account in the State. And for a short time innovation rushed onwards in full flood: extravagant projects of change were proposed: the Opposition in the House of Commons was treated by Radical faction with contempt. But the Ministers set their faces against extreme measures; their legislation was, in

the main, well conceived: and under the able and skilful leading of Peel, the Tories, thenceforward to be called Conservatives, regained confidence, and even increased in numbers. Omnipotent, too, as the Government was deemed to be, a variety of causes impaired its strength and gradually made it essentially weak. There was a frightful agrarian outbreak in Ireland, stained with detestable deeds of blood; the Ministry was compelled to have recourse to severe coercion; this incensed O'Connell and his "Tail," as it was called; he broke away from the "base, bloody, and brutal Whigs" with his submissive followers. Measures, too, introduced to reform the Established Church in Ireland, produced a schism among the men in office: four Ministers resigned, as they would not sanction the application of part of the property of the Church to secular uses. Nor had the Government a master mind in the House of Commons; Lord Althorp, if an amiable even an able man, was no match for his opponent, Peel; Lord John Russell was, as yet, a subordinate only. The majority, moreover, of the Ministry was so great that it became unmanageable and split into groups; and as disenchantment follows illusion, the wild hopes engendered by the Reform Bill had soon proved impossible to fulfil; and this disappointment told on the Government. In these circumstances a Conservative reaction quickly set in; within a few months Conservatism was distinctly gaining strength in the country. A kind of conspiracy, too, even now ill explained, was formed against the veteran Prime Minister, in which, perhaps, one or two of his col-

leagues took part; and the violent harangues of Brougham, who had been made Lord Chancellor, in order "to muzzle him," as was generally said, disgusted hundreds of moderate and right-minded men. The Grey Government, which, in 1833, seemed to be as absolute as the Long Parliament was in 1641–42, within eighteen months was almost reduced to impotence; Lord Grey suddenly resigned in the summer of 1834.

The Government of Lord Grey was not broken up. Lord Melbourne, one of his colleagues, became Prime Minister. He was in no sense a statesman of a high order, but he was a cautious, astute, and amiable man, an epicurean and a courtier, and he was for a long time at the head of the State. But his first administration did not last. William IV. had long resolved to get rid of the Whigs; the death of Lord Spencer, the father of Lord Althorp, gave the King the opportunity he sought. Melbourne and his colleagues were induced to resign; and as Peel, recognised by the Conservatives as their coming Minister, was for the moment abroad in Rome, Wellington was practically made a Dictator for a time, the Treasury and the seals of three Secretaries of State having been placed in his hands. It might have been supposed that a *coup d'état* of this kind, which elevated to supreme power a soldier lately the mark of popular hatred, would have raised an outcry throughout the nation; but England had returned to her rational mind. She acknowledged the great qualities of the Duke; it was felt that the best selection had been made. Wellington advised the

King to make Peel Prime Minister, and meanwhile discharged his multifarious duties with characteristic zeal and attention. Peel, on his return home, formed his first Government, and appealed to the country to give him its support. The strength of the Conservatives was greatly increased at the election that followed, but it did not secure Peel a majority in the House of Commons; he had to confront the Whigs, infuriated at their late removal, and the whole body of the Liberal and the Radical parties. The conduct of Peel, however, was judicious and able in the extreme, and Wellington co-operated with loyal zeal, if their personal relations were still rather strained. In the Tamworth Manifesto, as it has been called, Peel accepted reform as an accomplished fact, and indicated that he was prepared to carry out an essentially liberal policy. But he could not expect fair play from an Opposition eager to turn him out; a coalition between the Whigs and O'Connell was made, on the principle of appropriating part of the revenues of the Established Church of Ireland to education and other purposes; Peel was placed in a minority on this question. He was also defeated with respect to other measures. He resigned in the spring of 1835. Nevertheless, the conduct of the Duke and the Minister had generally been approved by Englishmen; they had made an effectual stand in behalf of Conservative principles; the appeal to the electorate had, in a great measure, restored the natural balance of parties; they had been beaten by a far from creditable intrigue.

The Melbourne Government was forced upon

William IV. when Peel had resigned after this brave struggle. Though never really strong, and declining as time rolled on, it continued in office for nearly six years; its existence was prolonged by more than one accident. The state of political affairs during this period was very remarkable if we bear in mind that a revolution had lately appeared imminent. The Conservative reaction which had set in, soon after 1832, went on with steadily augmented force; in England at least, it became dominant. The movement gradually drew into it what was best in English opinion; there was an English majority in the House of Commons in 1839–40. Peel promoted this turn in affairs with consummate skill; he completely broke away from the Toryism of the past; he announced his policy to be that of moderate progress, and though he acted as a powerful check on the Ministry, and successfully resisted some of their measures, he usually contented himself with modifying what was most open to objection in them. By these means he welded together the Opposition he led into a most formidable power, which in practice largely controlled the Government; and though the extreme Tories among his followers murmured complaints, his authority over his party was supreme. It should be added that his position and his attainments were perfectly adapted to a Reformed House of Commons after the frenzy of 1831–32 had subsided. He was himself a member of the great middle class of England; he was cautious, sagacious, able in the extreme; he was Conservative and Liberal alike; all this fell in with the prevalent ideas of the time.

The Ministry, on the other hand, if they retained their places, were never popular. The King was on the watch to trip them up, nor was his influence to be despised; the great body of the aristocracy was opposed to them; they had comparatively little hold on the nation, which regarded them with mingled contempt and distrust. And though several of their measures were well conceived, their policy was, in some respects, unfortunate; they were far from successful in foreign affairs and in finance; and if Palmerston and Lord John Russell were very able men, they did not possess the authority of Peel. These various circumstances told with effect on the Government; but what injured it most was, beyond question, its alliance with O'Connell and his "Tail," an alliance that ultimately became dependence. Englishmen were incensed that their rulers often bowed to the will of an Irish demagogue they hated and feared, and of an alien and disloyal faction, and that they accepted their insolent dictation on many questions. It should be remarked, too, that O'Connell's attitude in the House of Commons and in the country was rude and offensive, and that he was held up to public odium by the powerful press of England.

The estrangement between Wellington and Peel, which had long been marked, continued during a part of this period. It was rather increased by the circumstance that Peel was annoyed that Oxford had made the Duke her Chancellor: the prize, he thought, should have been bestowed on himself, the most distinguished of her scholars in the service

of the State. The two men, in fact, were of different natures, as in the somewhat analogous case of Canning; they were not yet intimate in social converse, though Peel felt and professed the sincerest regard for Wellington. But they worked loyally together in the interests of the State; the Duke as leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords played a very conspicuous and patriotic part. Ever true to his maxim that the "King's Government" must be steadily upheld against mere faction, he supported the Ministry against discontented Tories, who endeavoured to wreck it over and over again. He especially censured the invectives of Brougham, who, furious that he had lost the Great Seal, held up Melbourne and his colleagues to execration and scorn. The Conservative Opposition in the House of Lords was thus kept in harmony with the Opposition in the House of Commons; the Conservative cause was greatly strengthened; its ultimate triumph was rendered certain. The Duke, too, succeeded admirably in modifying the legislation of the Ministry where this seemed to require improvement, and in carrying it through the House of Lords when it was in the national interest. He supported the great measure of Corporate Reform, which passed into law at this period, though, with Peel, he changed some of its essential features. He refused to echo the outcry against the new Poor Law, in which many of the Tories joined; the result was fortunate for the aristocracy of the land. As regards Ireland and Irish affairs, which were very prominent at this time, he showed that he had no

sympathy with Orangeism and its pernicious doctrines; he assisted in effecting the commutation of the tithe of the Established Church, one of the most salutary reforms of these years; he gave his sanction to a compromise on Irish Corporate Reform. As regards foreign affairs he generally gave a cordial and honourable support to the Government. He approved of the suppression of the rebellion in Canada: he made no attack on the war with China in 1840. As a rule he supported the policy of Palmerston abroad, especially as regards the alliance with France, and the events that took place in Portugal and Spain, though all this was opposed to the ideas of 1814–15. But it deserves notice that he objected to the return of Napoleon's ashes from St. Helena; this has been called an unfeeling and a hard act, and it was in accordance with his unsympathetic nature. But it is by no means certain that Wellington was not in the right: the funeral of Napoleon revived the Napoleonic legend and shook the throne of Louis Philippe.

William IV. died rather suddenly in 1837; his niece, the Princess Victoria, became sovereign of these realms. She had been brought up in the traditions of the Whigs; her favourite attendants were all Whigs; Melbourne was her excellent and trusted mentor. This change strengthened the Melbourne Government; at the election which followed the demise of the Crown it gained a few seats in the House of Commons; but even the charm of the presence of the young Queen, and the influence she exercised on behalf of her friends,

only retarded for a time the Conservative triumph. The coronation took place in the last days of June, 1838; it was a magnificent, nay, an astonishing spectacle. Though the railway system was as yet in its infancy, the world of London seemed trebled in numbers; the royal procession passed through enormous crowds from the Palace to the Abbey of Westminster; the streets were decked out with banners and flags extending for miles. The ceremony within the abbey was imposing and touching; the crown was placed on the head of a girl of nineteen, who bore herself as became the daughter of a long line of kings, in the presence of the envoys of the allied Powers of Europe and the West and of all that was most noble and beautiful in the land; the pomp of ancient chivalry, the splendour of modern wealth, the solemn ritual of the Church handed down through the ages, gave a grandeur and an impressiveness all their own to the superb spectacle. The figure of Soult was conspicuous among the ambassadors of foreign Powers; the veteran soldier had just landed in England; he received everywhere an enthusiastic welcome. Wellington treated his old adversary as a favoured companion in arms; shouting crowds followed the aged warriors as they were seen riding or walking together; the brotherhood-in-arms, often formed between antagonists in the field, as we see in the cases of Turenne and Condé, of Eugène and Villars, has seldom been more strikingly displayed. The Duke took care that Soult should be shown everything that London, Woolwich, and Greenwich could show; with delicate

courtesy he tried to stop the publication of a paper from the pen of the malevolent Croker, which reflected on the Marshal's conduct at Toulouse; he even delayed with equal good feeling the appearance of a volume of his own Despatches. The British aristocracy, it is unnecessary to say, received the veteran as a most honoured guest; he was greeted with friendliness and respect in the great London houses; all kinds of attentions were lavished on him. Yet there was one awkward scene amidst these festive gatherings: the Lord Mayor proposed, at a great city banquet, that the Duke should speak to the toast of the "French Army"; he growled out, "Damn them, I'll have nothing to do with them but to beat them!"

In 1839 the Melbourne Government resigned, having had a majority of five only, on a West Indian question. The Queen sent for Wellington, who advised her to make Peel Minister. Peel was actually installed in office. But her Majesty clung to her old friends, and was too glad to find an opportunity not to give them up; she refused to make a change in the Ladies of her Bedchamber, all, without exception, devoted Whigs; Peel declined to be Minister on these terms. In this singular intrigue, if not a party to it, the Queen gave proof of a resolution hardly becoming her youth; and as Englishmen have no taste for such schemes of the Palace, she continued to be unpopular for many months, a circumstance that appears strange to those who did not live in those days. The Melbourne Administration resumed their places, but they were overshadowed

by an opposition that had the substance of power, and a series of events proved adverse in the extreme. The policy of Palmerston in the East was, indeed, successful and gave his colleagues and himself a passing triumph; but an expedition into Afghanistan was fitted out which led to a great disaster to the British arms; the tragedy of the Khyber Pass has not yet been forgotten. Meanwhile a succession of bad harvests had occurred; the condition of agriculture became very bad; trade and manufactures suffered even more severely. In this position of affairs, Chartism, the forerunner of the Socialism of these days, lifted its head menacingly and became formidable in many of the large towns; thousands of the artisan population were deprived of work; mills were closed; furnaces were extinguished; industry was well-nigh paralysed in several districts. There were dangerous riots in some places, which the Government did not suppress with vigour; the state of England seemed like that which it had been in 1829–30. The finances, too, were badly administered; there was a series of deficits, ominous and increasing; the cry for the repeal of the Corn Laws had arisen; it was felt that public affairs should be placed in abler hands.

The marriage of the Queen with Prince Albert revived her popularity to some extent, and was not without effect on the Government. Trade, too, had become somewhat better in 1841; a few of the measures of the Administration—the penny postage was the best of these—were liberal, and were generally approved. But nothing could arrest the decline of the Whigs; the Opposition, they knew, were their

masters; they only nominally held the reins of Government. Peel and Wellington steadily pursued their course; the pear was ripening; power was passing into their hands. By this time they had been fully reconciled; but it is more than doubtful if they were ever intimate friends, in the sense of complete and genuine friendship; the *idem sentire de republica* remained the bond between them. In this position of affairs, the Ministry made a desperate effort, unwise and unstatesmanlike, to retrieve their fortunes, but, as it deserved, it became worse than fruitless. Believing that they read correctly the signs of the times, they brought forward a series of Free-Trade measures, but Parliament refused to accept these; they had little or no effect on public opinion. At last, in May, 1841, Peel brought matters to a decisive test; he proposed a vote of no confidence in the Ministry, this was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of one. The Government, however, would not even now resign: they appealed to the Electorate on a Free-Trade cry; they were completely defeated and at last left office. Peel became Prime Minister for the second time; but he was now in command of a great majority in both Houses; the nation had clearly pronounced in his favor. The Conservative party which, in 1832, had been reduced to a handful of men, was now for the time supreme in the State; the result must be largely ascribed to the joint efforts of Peel and Wellington, in conducting an opposition with consummate prudence and skill.

CHAPTER XIII

DECLINING YEARS—DEATH—CHARACTER

Wellington in the Cabinet of Peel, but without office—He returns to the command of the army after the retirement of Hill—State of England when Peel became Minister in 1841—His great fiscal and economical reforms—Policy of Free Trade—The Income Tax—Peel's administration gradually undermined—The failure of the potato in Ireland—Discussions in the Cabinet—Attitude of Wellington—Resignation of Peel and return to office—The ultimate repeal of the Corn Laws carried through Parliament—Wellington succeeds in passing the measure through the House of Lords—Fall of Peel's Ministry—The Administration of Lord John Russell—Wellington often consulted—His conduct as Commander-in-Chief in his later years—Universal reverence felt for him—His death and funeral—His character as a general, as a military administrator, as a statesman, and in public and private life.

WELLINGTON had a seat in the Cabinet of Peel, but without office; he characteristically said that he wished to give place to a younger generation of men. But on the retirement of Hill, in 1842, he returned to the command of the army, which he had exercised many years before; he retained this high post until he disappeared from the scene. Peel, when he became Minister for the second time, found

England in a sea of troubles; disasters threatening in the East, discontent and distress at home, financial embarrassments on the increase, a violent agitation for the Repeal of the Corn Laws, a depression in most branches of trade and commerce, a state of public opinion deeply diseased. This is not the place to examine by what means the great Minister encountered the difficulties of the time, and in what degree he relieved or removed them. The peril in Afghanistan was averted, partly owing to the renown of the British arms and to the proved valour of the British soldier, partly to the dissensions of races which have never made use of success. A series of good harvests improved the state of the country, and quickened industry with fruitful results; the rapid development of the railway system, if attended by speculation which did much mischief, added enormously to the national wealth, and gave employment to a huge mass of surplus labour. These happy accidents, however, as they may rightly be called, were perhaps not more effectual in raising England from the critical situation into which she had fallen, and in launching her again on the path of progress, than the bold, wise, and masterly policy inaugurated by Peel in her domestic affairs. His Corn Law, indeed, was a mere compromise; it did not disarm the Anti-Corn-Law League, or silence its powerful champion, Cobden; it irritated many of the old Tory party, who thought the interests of agriculture betrayed and looked back at the surrender of 1829; it gave little or no impetus to our foreign commerce. But Peel revived, though on a grander scale, the eco-

nomic reforms of Pitt and Huskisson; he may fairly be said to have been the great apostle of Free Trade for England. He broke down an exclusive tariff, ruinous to the national industry; in hundreds of cases he abolished or reduced duties on imports required by our manufactures and trade; he thus liberated commerce from most injurious restraints encouraging industry to an immense extent, and giving an extraordinary impetus to the general welfare. And he had the courage—and this was very great—to carry out these reforms, to defray the charge, and to restore the equilibrium in the finances of the State, by subjecting the wealthier classes to the income tax, imposed hitherto only in time of war, an experiment deemed astonishing in those days.

The administration of Peel still appeared of unbroken strength, when Parliament adjourned after the session of 1845. The prosperity of the country was great; social discontent had all but completely ceased; the state of agriculture and commerce was full of promise. The Chartist movement seemed a phantom of the past; if the Anti-Corn-Law League retained life, its influence had been perceptibly weakened; England seemed to be advancing tranquilly on the path of progress. But a series of events had undermined the Government; the Conservative party had for some time been complaining of its chief. The Repeal movement of 1843 had assumed gigantic proportions under O'Connell; it had not been suppressed until very late; this alienated many of the high Tories. Peel, too, had introduced more

than one measure of reform for Ireland, which aroused the suspicions of Protestant England; one, a bill for the increased endowment of Maynooth, the seminary of the Irish Catholic priesthood, aroused a tempest of fierce sectarian passion. Our relations with America and France had, besides, been more than once strained; the pacific attitude of Lord Aberdeen, Peel's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, rather irritated and vexed the national pride, contrasting as it did with the pugnacity, the boldness, the meddling, of Palmerston. All this had an effect on the Ministry; but the ascendency of Peel was most weakened among his followers by his Free-Trade policy. He had enormously reduced the duties on foreign imports, with admirable results that could not be denied; how could high duties on foreign corn continue? was Protection to British agriculture to fetter our commerce abroad, and to impose a tax on the necessaries of life? The mind of the Minister was evidently turning by degrees to a relaxation of the Corn Laws, in a Free-Trade sense, probably to their abolition in a not distant future: in truth their maintenance was every year becoming more difficult, largely owing to the conclusive logic of Cobden. The Conservative party was stirred to its depths, especially the great aristocracy of the land; it was whispered that the Minister would betray them again, as he had betrayed them on the Irish Catholic question; a young man of genius gave great force to the sentiment. Disraeli, amidst the plaudits of scores of the followers of Peel, had announced that Protection was going the way of

Protestantism in 1828–29; and that the Government was an "organised hypocrisy," with a traitor at its head. If Peel's majority in the House of Commons had hardly declined, its fidelity to its leader was no longer assured.

Wellington took no part, as may be supposed, in the fiscal and economic reforms at this period; these were the work of Peel and his rising lieutenant, Gladstone. The Duke, however, came prominently forward during the events which ultimately led to the fall of Peel's second Ministry. In the early autumn of 1845, the precarious root which formed almost the only support of teeming millions in Ireland always in want, suddenly failed in many parts of the country; there was a certainty of dearth which might end in famine. Peel, who had been Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1812 to 1818, and knew the condition of the mass of the people, summoned a Cabinet and proposed to suspend the Corn Laws, in order to let cereals free into the ports; he added that, if suspended, they could hardly be revived; but only three of his colleagues concurred in this view. Erelong Lord John Russell announced, in a famous letter, that the time for the repeal of the Corn Laws had come, and that free trade in corn could not be deferred; this necessarily forced the hand of Peel; he submitted a measure to the Cabinet by which the Corn Laws would have been abolished in a few years. The Duke, though opposed to a free trade in corn, accepted the project on the characteristic plea that it was of paramount importance to sustain the Government, and not to hand

it over to the Whigs and Cobden ; but a leading member of the administration refused to follow his chief ; Peel resigned, seeing that his colleagues were divided in mind. The Queen called on Lord John Russell to form a Government ; but owing to dissensions with Palmerston Lord John proved unable to carry out his purpose ; Peel returned to office with his late Cabinet ; the only exception being the dissentient member. Peel, in the beginning of 1846, brought forward his famous measure for the gradual repeal of the Corn Laws, and the ultimate establishment of free trade in corn ; it is unnecessary to dwell on the memorable events that followed. A tempest of party fury broke against the Minister ; the mass of the Conservatives fell away from him, declaring that he had been pledged to Protection and that he had again shamefully betrayed his trust ; Disraeli made himself conspicuous for his brilliant invectives ; he concentrated against Peel a body of angry opinion in the House of Commons. The measure passed the House by a large majority, having the support of the Opposition, and of adherents who still clung to Peel ; but this success was for a moment only. Peel had introduced a Coercion Bill for Ireland in the early part of the session ; but the progress of this had been delayed ; the Whigs and the Protectionists had voted for it ; but they seized the opportunity to pronounce against it ; this "blackguard combination," as it was bluntly called by the Duke,—and faction seldom has played a more discreditable game,—placed Peel in a minority, and he at once resigned. Wellington carried the Corn Law

Bill through the House of Lords, insisting, as was his wont, that the Government must be upheld; the Peers, though detesting it, did not attempt to resist it; times had changed since 1831–32. It is very remarkable that the outcry raised against Peel by the Protectionists did not affect the Duke; it was felt that, from their point of view, he was hardly to blame; the veneration which his age and his character inspired throughout the nation was more than a sufficient safeguard.

The administration of Lord John Russell followed that of Peel; it was practically kept in office by the late Minister, who opposed the Protectionists by all the means in his power; it adopted and extended his Free-Trade policy. But essentially it was a feeble Government; it had to cope with difficult crises, notably with the great Irish famine of 1846–47, and with revolutionary events abroad and even at home; Palmerston, an object of dislike to the Queen and her Consort, was a thorn in its side. The Duke was consulted more than once, on occasions when it seemed about to fall; he had become his sovereign's most trusted servant, especially since the untimely death of Peel. But, as a rule, he confined himself to his post at the head of the army; the aged veteran greatly distinguished himself; the setting sun still shed many a bright ray of glory. I shall notice afterwards the influence Wellington had on our military system, during the long period when virtually it had passed into his hands; I shall here only refer to what he achieved in the last years of his life. By this time he had exceeded the allotted span

of threescore and ten; but though he was not free from the infirmities of old age his martial spirit remained unbroken; he still professed himself able to defend the State in the field; he was still animated by his enduring sense of duty. As far back as 1839–40, when a rupture between Prussia and France appeared probable, he had declared that, with the consent of his sovereign, he was willing to take command of a Prussian army against the enemies he had encountered in another age; this offer, it is believed, was repeated many years afterwards. Wellington observed with profound and intelligent interest the events of the first great Sikh war after the disappearance of our old ally, Runjeet Singh; he fully appreciated the desperate battles that were then fought; the Harding of Albuera, one of his Peninsular officers, who almost saved India at a terrible crisis, was rightly singled out for the praise he deserved. In 1849, when Gough, a dashing but imprudent soldier, and, perhaps, too harshly condemned at the time, was defeated at Chillianwalla, with heavy loss, the Duke insisted that Napier should be sent out to retrieve the disaster; otherwise he declared he would embark for India himself; the veteran had then passed his eightieth year. One of his best services at this period was his admirable plan of defending London against a Chartist outbreak, threatened in the year of revolutions, 1848; his arrangements were masterly and skilfully concealed; Chartism sank in ignominious collapse. He was also desirous, about this time, to transfer the command of the army to Prince Albert; but the

SIR HENRY HARDING.
(After the painting by E. Eddis.)

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Prince for weighty reasons declined; the veteran remained at his glorious post until his death.

As Wellington's declining years rolled on, he became an object of national veneration perhaps unequalled in England. The renown of his military exploits remained undimmed; a new generation recognised his great services in the field; it was felt that he was a principal author of the long peace which followed the French Revolutionary War; as Napier wrote, the Empire reposed under the Glory of Waterloo. He was still distinctly the first soldier of the time; Soult, Paskievitch, Radetsky, were illustrious names, but they could not be compared to him in the opinion of Europe. The unpopularity of 1831–32 had passed away; the voice of faction had been hushed; his sagacity, his wisdom, above all, his single-minded and patriotic sense of duty, had sunk deep into the hearts of his revering countrymen. He had become a kind of Mentor of the Palace for his still youthful sovereign, who looked up to him with almost a daughter's affection; when he made his appearance in the House of Lords; its members hung on the words he uttered; he was always welcomed with a more than respectful greeting as he passed through the busiest streets of London. It was a touching sight to behold the veteran riding quietly to do his work at the Horse Guards, or taking his customary exercise in the Park; every hat was doffed as he responded to the universal salute. In this respect his last days and those of Marlborough were very different; the victor of Blenheim and Ramillies died unlamented; but the judgment of

England fell in with the truth; there are "damned spots" on Marlborough's name; as the poet has said, no record can cast shame on Wellington. The end of this history of glory in arms and of faithful service to the State came rather suddenly on the 14th of September, 1852. The Duke, as Warden of the Cinque Ports, had been staying at Walmer; he had intended to meet one of his nieces at Dover; he fell ill, and expired in a few hours. The news was rapidly spread far and near; it was received on the Continent not without emotion; as was eloquently said, "a Pillar of the old order has been removed from an edifice tottering under the Revolutionary storm." From the Sovereign to the most humble citizen, the great soldier and statesman was universally mourned; a Master in Israel, men felt, had died and had left no successor. The body lay in state for some weeks; reverent spectators flocked to see it, day after day, at Apsley House, the London residence of the Duke; the staffs of a marshal of all the great armies of Europe were exhibited, and formed a most interesting sight. A public funeral was solemnly announced; Queen Victoria expressed a wish that Parliament should associate itself with it, and with "the memory of one whom no Englishman can name without pride and sorrow." The ceremony took place on the 18th of November; Wellington was borne through the mourning streets of the capital to the cathedral, which holds the ashes of Nelson. The military pageant was not very imposing, though it was attended by representatives of nearly all the great

Powers, nor was the procession formed by the chief officers of the State remarkable. What was most touching and most significant was the enormous multitude, not only of the London citizens, but of visitors from all parts of the country, who filled the streets and ways of the city for miles, and wore the solemn look of a people in grief.

Wellington was of the middle height and rather slightly formed; he had been delicate in youth, but in mature age was strong—the epithet of the "Iron Duke" is well known; his health began to fail after he had passed seventy; but he retained his faculties almost unimpaired; he was in his eighty-fourth year when he died. The extant portraits of him are not very good; they are somewhat tame, and hardly reproduce features which were evidently those of a very remarkable man. I only beheld him when in advanced old age; his figure was bent, his stature was shrunk; but it was impossible not to understand the character of that wise countenance, and especially the look of that keen, piercing eye, which always reminded me of that of a raven. It was no association of ideas that made you feel that you were in the presence of a superior nature when you saw Wellington; for the rest, he had the simple and somewhat reserved bearing distinctive of the born English gentleman; there was nothing showy or ostentatious about him. The ground plan, so to speak, of his character is evident to those who have studied his career. He never rose to the topmost heights of genius; he was deficient in imaginative force; he was less remarkable for originality than

for strong common sense. Sagacity was his chief intellectual gift; he was admirable whether in estimating the prospects of a campaign, or in laying down a plan of operations in war, or, usually, in perceiving what ought to be done in politics; his judgment in any given situation was of the very highest value. He had, also, remarkable quickness and clearness of insight; he confounded his adversaries by his ready skill in the field; he knew in affairs of State when to stand firm or to retreat, at least in the great body of instances. It is unnecessary to add that his professional knowledge was great; he had mastered the details of the service in youth; he was perfectly able to direct an army before he had a command; his moral excellences were, perhaps, even more striking; he had extraordinary strength of character, he was animated throughout his long career by a steadfast and unerring sense of duty; this was the principle of his conduct, from which he never swerved; loyalty and patriotism were his guiding motives; he was singularly devoid of ambition and personal selfishness. His perfect integrity, too, was one of his finest qualities; in positions in which he might have made immense wealth, and that without a stain on his character, he thought only of the public service; the slightest taint of corruption was odious to him; in this respect he had much in common with the Patricians of the best ages of Rome. For the rest, his nature was cold, hard, and stern; he had little sympathy with the social life around him; he was never happy in the circle of home. Of the blemishes in

his domestic relations it is needless to speak; they were not grave and hardly require notice.

More than half a century has elapsed since the death of Wellington; eighty-eight years since he fought his last battle at Waterloo. His figure stands out in the light of history; an impartial estimate of his career has become possible. It was the fashion of his day, in England, to compare him with Napoleon; but no masters of war were more completely different; Wellington was not a military genius of the first order. The Peninsular War was his great achievement; in this long passage of arms his powers were made grandly manifest. With characteristic sagacity he perceived how Portugal could be defended against the French armies, notwithstanding their immense numerical strength; how Spain, in that event, could hardly be subdued; this was a military conception of the very highest merit. In conducting the contest, too, he gave proof of most remarkable gifts; his plans were usually profound and well laid; no general of the Coalition understood, even nearly as well, what were the inherent defects of the French army, and how it could be encountered and beaten in the field. And his project of defending Portugal at Torres Vedras was a masterpiece; if not wholly original, it was magnificently worked out; firmness of purpose and force of character in war have never been more conspicuously seen than when he stood on this rock before Lisbon confronting the colossal might of Napoleon. Wellington's operations that led to Vitoria are the best examples of his combinations on a great scale in the field; they were most

ably designed; they were the prelude to a decisive victory. And as we look back at the Peninsular War, and at the vicissitudes of that protracted contest, it is impossible to deny that the British commander was the principal author of the ultimate issue, if he owed much to the discords and jealousies of his antagonists, and to the extravagance to be laid to the charge of Napoleon in directing operations in Spain from a desk in Paris. Justice, too, should be done to the skill and resource shown by Wellington in making his Peninsular army the admirable instrument of war it became, and in fashioning his Portuguese and Spanish levies into disciplined and, usually, effective soldiers. On the whole, it may be said that the British General was superior to every other chief of the League of Europe in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars; this, I am convinced, will be his place in history. Nevertheless Wellington cannot rank high as a strategist; here he is not even to be named with Napoleon; he was hardly the equal of the Archduke Charles. An attentive examination of his Peninsular campaigns proves that he made many grave strategic mistakes; this was conspicuously seen in the Campaign of 1809; he ought not to have fought at Busaco; he narrowly escaped discomfiture before Salamanca. Strategically, too, he was more than once outmanœuvred in his long duel with Soult along the Pyrenean frontier; the success he achieved was partly due to his marked superiority in the shock of battle, and to the qualities of his Peninsular army, and partly to defects in the qualities of his opponents. And it

is simply disregarding palpable truths to say that, when he encountered the greatest of strategists, he was not outgeneralled almost from first to last, though his hand was certainly forced by Blücher, and he would have probably acted quite differently but for his impetuous colleague.

It is to the field of battle that we have to repair to see the best qualities of Wellington in the conduct of war. He was hardly as great a tactician as Marlborough; he did not achieve anything equal to Blenheim and Ramillies. Nor did he ever show the genius of Frederick the Great at Leuthen; but he was a much safer and more prudent commander; he made no such mistakes as were made at Kolin and Torgau. But whether on the offensive or the defensive, and especially when he had a position to hold, he proved himself to be a great master of tactics. He was not superior at Assaye to Clive at Plassy; but in boldly attacking he took the right course; his movements in battle were very fine; he plucked safety and victory from great apparent danger. His passage of the Douro, under the beard of Soult, was an operation of admirable skill and resource: had he been properly seconded the distinguished Marshal would, not improbably, have met the fate of Dupont at Baylen. At Talavera he rightly made a resolute stand; he might otherwise have lost his army; and he inflicted a severe defeat on Joseph and Victor. Fuentes d'Onoro is the one of his battles in which his powers are least distinctly manifest; he acknowledged himself, that he ought to have been beaten; but probably

he did not make the arrangements before the fight, and he executed admirably a most difficult change of front. The keenness of his insight, and his remarkable gift of turning to account a mistake made by an adversary on the field, were grandly conspicuous at Salamanca; he gained a great victory by a tactical stroke; this, Napier has written, was the most brilliant of his offensive efforts. Few passages of war are of more striking interest than the prolonged struggle between Wellington and Soult on the Pyrenees, before Bayonne, at Orthes, at Toulouse; the fine combinations of the French Marshal were baffled, over and over again, by the activity, the *coup d'œil*, the brilliant movements of the British commander in the actual stress of battle. And, not to speak of his stern constancy, perhaps never more magnificently displayed, Wellington gave proof of the very highest capacity and military skill on the great day of Waterloo; he showed that, as a tactician, he was a master of his art, in the general arrangement of his army on the ground; in husbanding his reserves to the latest moment; in screening his troops from the destructive fire of the artillery which gave Napoleon so many triumphs; and, finally, in attacking when he saw that the day was won. His conduct of Waterloo is his real title to eulogy in the Campaign of 1815; it is a legitimate set-off to no doubtful strategic errors.

Wellington, to a very considerable extent at least, made his Peninsular army what it became, the best army in Europe for its size. His military administration, during the many years when he held the

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.
(From a steel engraving.)

post of Commander-in-Chief, is hardly entitled to high praise. There is something in the system of war established in England which makes her forces inefficient in time of peace; this has been seen from the Peace of Utrecht to the South African War. Wellington did not attempt to make reforms in the army, of which he was the head; he allowed it to exist in the routine of the past; he did not try to improve its quality. He had the highest opinion of the British officer; but he did not lay stress on his professional knowledge; his idea was that he should be able to lead his men and to fight. He thought the non-commissioned officers the backbone of the army; but he hardly sought to improve their condition; he regarded the great body of the British soldiers as excellent troops when under severe discipline, but prone to drunkenness and degrading vices; he protested against the abolition or the mitigation of the barbarities of the lash. But where he was most deficient in chief command was that he would not recognise the manifold changes which the progress of the age and material inventions were making in all that relates to war; and that he would not adapt the British army to the requirements of the time. He would not hear of a short-service system, or of the formation of a reserve; Brown Bess, in his eyes, was a perfect weapon; he thought rifled guns and field shells of very little value. But in this conservatism, it may fairly be said, he trod in the footsteps of the chiefs of the Continental armies; Soult and Paskievitch clung to the traditions of the past, in which they had been

trained and had learned war; Moltke alone—then an unknown subaltern—had perceived what the future could effect for the military art. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that, as Commander-in-Chief, Wellington did not do England great and patriotic service. From an early period he saw how, as has always happened, British statesmen, under the influence of a prolonged peace, were allowing the army to be dangerously reduced in strength, and how the defences of the country were being neglected. When in the Cabinet of Peel he entreated that the subject should be considered with care, and that the military power of the nation should be increased. But the time was one of economic reform and retrenchment; the warnings of the great veteran were but little heeded. His celebrated letter to Sir John Burgoyne, written just before the tornado of 1848, showed how insecure was the position of England, and how exposed to foreign invasion; it had a decisive effect on the national mind; despite too long intervals of thoughtlessness and neglect, the country has never since been so completely unprepared for war. It should be added that Wellington lived to see an increase of the militia force, a reform he had always had at heart, made by the first administration of Lord Derby, in 1852.

Apart from his brief apprenticeship in the Irish Parliament, the political life of Wellington extended over a third of a century. He can hardly be called a great statesman; but no eminent English soldier has ever given proof of such statesmanlike qualities; here he was by many degrees superior to Marl-

borough, consummate in diplomacy, but not in politics. If we recollect that he belonged to the Protestant *noblesse* of Ireland, an exclusive oligarchy of race and creed; that he did not enter the Cabinet until he was nearly fifty; that he had been in command abroad for a series of years, and that his knowledge of England was comparatively small, it appears surprising that his political distinction was what it was, and that he did so much as a civil servant of the State. The secret is to be found in his wisdom and well-balanced judgment, and in his noble sense of public duty; it must be borne in mind, besides, that in India, in the Peninsula, even in France, he had to play a remarkable part in political affairs. His antecedents and the associations of his career connected him with the Tory party; but he was usually a moderate and fair-minded Tory; he had nothing in common with the school of the extreme followers of Pitt. And hence it was that, as a general rule, he adapted himself to the circumstances of the time; seldom resisted measures he foresaw were required; was, like Peel, a Conservative in the truest sense of the word. His two greatest achievements in the sphere of politics were the emancipation of the Irish Catholics in 1829, and his conduct in opposition from 1833 to 1841; he accomplished a great reform most unjustly delayed, and no one else could have carried it out at the time; he gradually restored the balance of parties in the State, with the skilful and admirable assistance of Peel, and secured for a great Conservative statesman a decisive triumph. Wellington, no doubt,

made grave political mistakes; he rather discredited himself when he broke with Canning; he was too much of a dictator when Prime Minister; he did not rightly interpret the signs of the time; his stubborn resistance to the Reform Bill cannot be justified. But he sincerely believed that Parliamentary reform was incompatible with the ideal he had ever before him, "that the King's Government must be a strong government"; and with many of the ablest men in the country he was convinced that reform would be fatal to the State. For the rest, Wellington in politics, as in all his public conduct, was animated by a patriotism always, in the long run, acknowledged; it was this that gave him such weight in the national councils.

Wellington was not an orator or a graceful public speaker, but, like men of powerful and clear intellect, he always managed to convey his meaning to an audience he addressed; not a few of his sayings were epigrammatic, and made a strong impression. The enormous mass of his despatches on military and civil affairs give us a striking idea of his great capacity; they are very superior to those of Marlborough; they are written in a simple and admirable style, which perfectly express the writer's thoughts; occasionally they contain terse and happy phrases. The Duke was an excellent country gentleman; as a landlord he was just and considerate; he was, moreover, a diligent man of business; his estate of Strathfieldsaye, one of the gifts of the nation, would, he used to say, have been ruinous to any other owner; yet he contrived to make it pay, and

he greatly improved it. He was fond of the chase and other rural pursuits; men still living remember the spare figure in scarlet crossing steadily, but hardly skilfully, a somewhat difficult country. The Duke was seen at his best in the social hour, at festive gatherings in great country houses; he had real enjoyment in these; he was occasionally induced to talk of his campaigns; his anecdotes and remarks, as we know from Greville, were always interesting, sometimes of the greatest value. He necessarily filled a conspicuous place in the world of London; for many years his surviving companions in arms assembled at his board at the Waterloo banquets; he was a constant and most favoured guest of his sovereign; the aristocracy of all parties vied to do him honour. Yet he appears to have been less at home in London than among his friends in the country; in truth, he had so much official work to do that he had but little time for what is called society. As I have said, he was not happy in his domestic life; his wife was hardly a fitting helpmeet; he stood rather aloof from his immediate family; his home was not blessed by devoted affection. Though he was really attached to a few friends, he was lonely, honoured and revered as he was; he never attracted profound human sympathy; this was one of his defects as a chief; he was respected by his officers and soldiers, never loved. His correspondence, as may be supposed, was immense; he was punctual and precise in attending to it; his replies to impertinent and frivolous letters, which came in in thousands, were to the point and often very amusing. As we

look back at that long and glorious career of renown in arms and civic virtue, we feel that the poet has written the truth of Wellington:

"Rich in saving common sense
And as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four square to all the winds that blew!"

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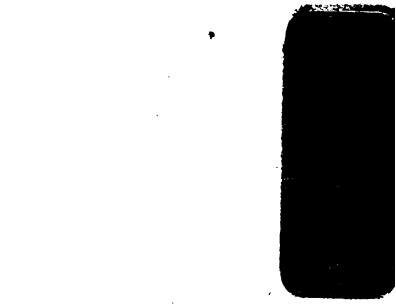
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